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VERSICLES.

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VERSICLES.

BY

THOMAS IRWIN.

"Celtic Union."

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THIS LITTLE BOOK

IS

Dedicated

TO

THE MEMORY

OF

A DEAR FRIEND.

VERSICLES.

An Italian Holiday.

I.

In the heart of the southern Autumn
On a festival morn we awaken,
As the dews by the blue airs of dawning,
From the eaves of our cottage are shaken ;
The vine bough looks in through the lattice
With purpling clusters to feast us,
And whispers with tinkling leaflets,
"Oh, put forth your fingers and taste us"—
The stream floating on through the morning
Has a beaconing smile on its levels ;
In thin haze the palms by the mountain
Are waiting the evening revels ;
The song of the vine-dresser gaily
Rings up in the sun as he passes
Along to the lake in the valley,
Where gather the harvest-brown lasses ;

And o'er the guitar that he carries
His fingers stray, carelessly tuning,
While hangs on his jacketed shoulder
The crescented knife for the pruning.
Away in the airs of the forest
Where floats the blue smoke in their drifting,
The carolling bells of the Convent
Their voice for the matins are lifting;
And streaming along from the village,
Through fields yellow-tented with corn,
The pious folk Chapelward wander
In sunshine this festival morn.

II.

Beneath, where the darkeling ocean
Sends landward its tame sultry roar,
The barques of the brown Coral Fishers
Surge on to the hill-shadowed shore—
Surge on 'mid their oars' rapid flashing,
Enriched by the wealth they have won
In yon deeps, where the swart sandy ridges
Of Barbary seethe in the sun.
Lo! now from the chesnut-shrined cottage
And meadow of scant tawny maize,
Wife, sweetheart, and comrade are thronging,
In joy through the broadening rays.

Now grouped by the marge of the waters
Their passionate gestures are seen,
Now rings 'mid the sweet song of welcome
The clash of the dry tamborine;
Ton-ton, tirarira, ton-ton!
Floats upward their jubilee wild,
Ton-ton, tirarira, ton-ton!
'Mid the voices of mother and child;
With hands and with garments wild floating,
Like Mænads they dance on the turf,
While the horn that the boatmen are blowing
Sounds hoarse through the crush of the surf.

III.

Lo! southward, where sleep the faint cloudlets
Along the hills bronzed and brown,
Glares hotly through heavy-showered sunlight
The roofs of the old tiled town:
Across the great corn-land's expansure
The shadows drift sultry and slow,
By the ebon-glossed curve of the river
And forest-skirt hazed in the glow.
While, far on the rim of the inland
The City's domes glitter on high,
And the long dizzy tracks of the roadways
Wind dimly away toward the sky.

Long roads where the dusty-leafed olive
Pines drily through wide Summer noon,
And the spire of the black cypress dials
The slow silver hours of the moon;
Where the vine in the midnights of Autumn,
As bleakly the passing winds mourn,
Drops down the red leaflets that tinkle;
And sadly the setting stars burn
With a wistful and wearying brightness,
To pilgrims who pause on their way,
By the old marble Cross at the ruin,
To drink the well's waters, and pray;
But now, through the festival shadows
That fleck them through merry sunshine,
The gay Muleteer is advancing,
His heavy skins bursting with wine.
Now the Mountebank, glorious in motley,
Strolls on with his ass to the Fair;
For the young he has bracelets and ballads,
For the aged folk physic and prayer;
With a bosom as light as his pocket
He sings off the griefs of his soul,
While the bells of his beast in the sunlight
Blend into the rich barcarole.
All day to-and-fro from the orchards
The fruit-laden harvest girls run,
All day through the gold of the corn-land
The sicklemen bend in the sun;

All day the low wind of the Autumn
  Blows dry through the blaze of the light,
Till snow-chilled through evening's stillness
  It breathes from the Appenine's height.

IV.

Ah, well! as we turn from the lattice
  With eyes by the glory made blind,
A dream through our memory floating
  Comes soft as the ocean-cooled wind:
A vision of temperate beauty
  Far off, but for ever anigh,
Like Spring on the skirts of the Summer,
  Is shaped on yon northern sky.
Rise, Realm of the heart and the fancy,
  Old Land of the emerald lea!
Where the blue peaks of Wicklow are gleaming
  Through soft rainy lights o'er the sea;
Where drowse the dim Glendalough ruins
  'Mid legends that live in their grey,
As fresh as the many-leafed ivy
  That curtains their walls from decay;
Where the rich palace spires of Killarney
  Bend over the arbutus brakes,
And mirror their purples at sunset,
  Along the sweet dreamland of lakes;

Or nor'ward, where sunbeam and shadow
Roll over strong Carlingford's crest,
The grey monarch shrines from the ocean
One water of beauty and rest.
Sweet Bay, where we've wandered in Autumn,
By leafy old roads in the noon,
Or under the woods of Rostrevor
Sailed silently on with the moon;
While the fisherman paused in his rowing,
And pointed beneath, as he told
Of the proud city merged in the waters
All scattered with armour and gold.
There oft have we seen from the casement,
When days of old festival came,
The bonfires in midsummer twilight
Drape Mourne's grey bastions in flame.
Oft watched as the dusk windy evenings
Fell blankly along the low bar,
The forms of the dim stormy shipping
Rock under some tempest-eyed star;
While thunder-mists curled on the headland,
And luridly hung o'er the plain,
As the long-gathered heat of the inland
Swept seaward in lightning and rain.

V.

Well, though far away from the homestead,
With dusk foreign faces around,

And strange Tuscan accents, that never
Can fill up the heart with their sound,
This day shall be festal and joyous,
For memories flocking shall come
Like summer-winged birds to our cottage,
And make in our bosoms their home.
Yes, bright shall it be, though the shadows
Of distance around us are cast,
Cheered by the star of the future,
And sunned from the love of the past.
While round us the vineyards are silent,
The mist gathers over the sheaves,
And the gold hand of Autumn lifts slowly
The hectic-tinged tinkling leaves;
Now merry with fancies, now mournful
With dreams that to Erin belong,
We'll cheer the sad thought of its distance,
With echoes of Italy's song;
And if for a moment its presence
Be lost in the song or the smile,
We'll turn to some star that is shining,
In peace on our own blessed Isle.
And as through the glimmering casement
The far heaven smiles on our rest,
Breathe a prayer for its peace and its glory,
Then sleep with our hearts to the West.

So heap the broad table with peaches,
With white bread, with olives, and wine,
And pile by our seat in the arbour
Our old poet volumes divine.
All souls shall be happy around us,
As cheerful as noon and as clear;
Matron and dusky-cheeked peasant
Shall feast by the walnut-tree here;
And when the star flushes the even
The minstrels shall pass by its light,
And the maidens shall have, ere they slumber,
Their heart-full of music to-night.

SONG.

Chi-chi-chi, chi-chi-chi! the Cicala is singing
Upon the dry olive leaves all the blue noon;
Lucidly, lucidly, is the fire-fly winging
His flight in the light of the mellowing moon:
All is Italy round
To the balmiest bound
From the sun in the sky to the grape on the ground.

I.

Now, noonday is blazing o'er pasture and cliff,
The sicklemen couch in the tents of the wheat,
And the wide world is hazed in the flood of the heat
From the sheep in the plane to the snowy sailed skiff—

Here stretched in the cool by the glimmering pool,
Let's quaff of the waters that bubble to light;
And the wreathe that we twine, be it plucked from the vine
That shall yield us its purplest grape at night.
In its shadow we'll rest while the noonday is shining,
But its fruit shall be pressed when the sun is declining.

II.

Like swallows that follow the course of the sun,
We bask in the north in the Summer's bright youth—
But, like the wise swallow, we sail to the south
When the last golden days of the Autumn are gone.
Now the fire-flies are stirring, and glancing, and whirring,
Their light fills the night like the Cicala's chirring,
And the moon—we scarce miss'd her—far off in her lustre,
Comes tingling the glacier spires in a cluster:
Stream out the rich music, for, lightly entwining,
In dances we'll thread till the moon is declining.

Chi-chi-chi, chi-chi-chi! the Cicala is singing
Upon the dry olive leaves all the blue noon,
Lucidly, lucidly, is the fire-fly winging
Its flight in the light of the mellowing moon:
To the balmiest bound
All is Italy round,
From the glow in the air to the grape on the ground.

Shakspeare's Drinking Bowl.

"I give and bequeath to my daughter Judith, my broad gilt silver bowl."—*Vide Shakspeare's Will.*

I.

Oh! for the broad gilt silver bowl
That oft to Shakspeare's lip was lifted,
Brimm'd with sack or jovial wine,
That cast across his spacious soul
A ruby sunset, whence there drifted
Rarest thought and wit divine!

II.

Could we from the earth's old palace
Pluck this relic where 'tis hid,
Richer memories would unfold
Round its rim than from that chalice*
Found within the pyramid,
Fable fringed and filled with gold.

* The vase formed of a single gem which a magician discovered in the Pyramid of Cheops.—*Vide Iamblicus, de Mysteriis Ægyptorum.*

III.

Ben has quaff'd it, while his fancies
Thronged with shapes of mask and faery,
Frolic, humour, moonlight revel:
Witch-like Webster, necromancy's
Monarch, touched it, brain aweary,
Straining scenes of ghost and devil.

IV.

Oft sententious Selden grasped it
As he wiped his beard, and quoted
Sages saw with learned devotion:
Often, too, has Raleigh clasped it
While his musing memory floated
Toward the world beyond the ocean.

V.

Beaumont bland, to star-eyed Herrick,
Passed this shining goblet ere he
Knew it, dreaming o'er some lyric:
Fletcher, with the bright curled forehead
And Greek gesture, held it o'er head
When he spun down the canary.

VI.

Never yet, since bold and bright,
The Wine God with Bacchantes feasted
In the grape woods of sweet fable,
Shone a cup amid such might
Of mirth, and laughter jovial-chested,
As the cup of Shakspeare's table.

VII.

Just to sit and watch this throng
Seated in the rush-strewn chamber,
While the glow of Autumn even
Filled the room, were worth the song—
Aye, the richest we remember,
Sung in Heliconian Heaven.

VIII.

Kings, Magicians, Sages they:
One, the Hero passed from regions
In the sunset's space of sea;
One, the Sage with wisdom grey,
Chief, the magic King, whose legions
Star the world's eternity!

IX.

When the wine had flushed their brows,
Autumn scarce could count on grapes
Half the wondrous wit that crown'd them,
Or great Winter's cloud and flood
Image the fantastic shapes
Powerful Fancy raised around them.

X.

Vanished now those glorious souls
In the home of the All-Seeing
Confident of Mighty Ones;
As the lonely planet rolls
Nearer to the Springs of Being
Centered in yon sky of suns.

XI.

But, though eloquent no more,
Still the world their wealth inherits:
Though the ocean calms the river
Its sweet echoes cheer the shore,
Though the Light-bequeathing spirits
Pass—yet can they perish never.

XII.

Oh! when shall rise a race on earth,
Whose souls shall strike such depening root
Of Thought and rich Imaginings?
Eternal mountain forms, with girth
Of pasture, forest bloom, and fruit,
Keen starry steeps and freshening springs.

XIII.

Shall yet again our star be given
One, dearest Shakspeare, like to thee,
With heart of love, and brain of power;
Bright wandering troubador of Heaven,
Sweet minstrel of humanity,
With music for the poorest bower?

XIV.

Yes, even above the paths they trod
Beings mightier yet will shine
Through the age's golden noons;
Sons of the all-fruitful God
In richer fields, and float divine
Across the earth like harvest moons.

A Group in Queen Anne's Time.

'Tis noon above Saint James's Park,
A pleasant scene this summer day,
O'er haughty belle and modish spark
Glances the light in sunny play:
Along the levels of the pond
The airs in languid pulses stir,
And loom above the trees beyond
The Towers of hoary Westminster:
While from the distance eastward there,
Beneath the cloud of smoky shade,
Floats to the Park's politer air
The softened roar of city trade:
Along the grass full many a group
Are pacing slow in lightsome talk,
Full powdered wig and swelling hoop
Flutter along the velvet walk:
Coy ribands wave on breast and waist,
Rings flash, and lace's golden glow
Displays the deep matured taste
Of blooming maid and brilliant beau:

Now comes a high-heel'd courtier by,
In ruffles, sword, and curled toupèe;
While glitters in his serious eye
The jest he'll give the world to-day.
For long my Lord in bed hath lain
This morn, to make his daily wit;
And, musing deep, was seen to drain
Five cups of perfum'd chocolate.
But now, secure in wit and sense,
To battle moves, with brow of calm—
Three jests are his, for thrust or fence,
And one keen, waspish epigram.

Now moving through the moving throng,
The toast of many a Club appears—
A Beauty prais'd in polished song
Amid St. James's furthest spheres.
Though bright her eyes, her cheek is paled,
For midnight found her in the dance,
And all the morn her fancy sailed,
Half dreaming, through a rich romance.
So eager she to glean and use
The golden precepts bards have sown,
To guard the heart she fear'd to lose,
And make all other hearts her own.
So, through the crowd of bowing Wits,
All longing eagerly to woo

Her fragrant smile, she lightly flits,
And scatters looks of courteous blue.
Her hoop before her clears the way—
Her maid behind her treads discreet,
With pink chintz kirtle, slashed with grey,
Slipper'd in silk, and soft, and neat.

Now hat in hand, all statelily,
My Lord before the Beauty bows,
And, fill'd with finest fervency,
Declares her cheek outblooms the rose.
The while the Lady curtsies low,
Light waving back a perfumed tress;
And through the courtly groups they go,
With proud and conscious carelessness.
The dainty patch—an ebon fleck—
Points out each dimple on her cheek;
Brown ringlets touch the stately neck,
And whisper-mingled laughters break.
As on they float; and passed beyond
The silken crush of fashion, where
Along the margin of the pond,
The gold fish rising take the air,
My Lord prepares his doom to meet,
With snuff-pinch in his fingers shrined,
And, in one rounded rich conceit,
Declares the passion of his mind.

Defend her, Heaven! what means the man?—
It may be love, in sooth, for by
Her conscious cheek the tiny fan
Is fluttering like a butterfly.
Nor will she break the lengthening pause,
But paces slow in silent mood;
And, with a finger coily draws
Above her brow the crimson hood;
And smiles within it, for this Wit
Is heir to wealth and titles, too;
And she may be my Lady yet—
What more can Maid of Honour do?

The Courtier, of his prize secure,
Well versed in various female traits,
Settles his cuffs, and swears, demure,
"That day's the happiest of his days:"
And takes her soft and silken hand,
And, pressing it, is heard to say,
"Here, sweetest nymph, I hold the wand
Whose touch can charm my heart away:
And as one simple ring shall hold
This finger in its circlet's space,
My heart, within thy smile of gold,
Shall linger in a charmed embrace."

But now the Park is cleared, and soon
Beyond the Palace trees the Sun
Looks from its western afternoon
Along the cots of Kensington:
Now studious nymphs prepare their arms
In boudoirs full of mirrored light:
And add to their resistless charms
With riband, essence, jewel bright.
Along the street the soft sedans,
That move in silent sable flocks,
Give glimpses sweet of cheeks and fans;
And doors resound with dinner knocks.

In Coffee houses deep in town,
The powdered critics sit and say,
That Congreve's wit is smouldering down,
And St. John's genius burns away:
Till darkness fills the city's space,
The Court, the Senate Hall, and Stage,
And calmly rests this modish Race,
And silent breathes the passing Age.
Now all is o'er: along the ways
The courtiers trod, new shapes arise;
New modes of mind, more earnest days
Roll onward under brightening skies.

The Wits have passed to other stars,
And all the Beauties' wither'd blooms,
Like rose leaves shrined in Indian jars,
Scarce touch us from their odorous tombs.

This Sailing World.

SONG.

I.

This sailing world, the poets say,
Is like a festal barque of light,
Wherein we coast the sun all day,
And wander through the stars by night.
Thus, love, may life so richly roll,
That, when with pleasure wearied, we
May still delight the slumbering soul
With dreams of joy that is to be.

II.

The purple sunset depth is filled,
As with a plenteous sea of wine,
The moon is like a goblet chilled
In snows, to make its draught divine.
But what to me are earth and skies,
Though banquet flushed from West to South,
When sweeter moonlight's in thine eyes,
And richer wine upon thy mouth?

III.

Here let us rest, beneath the night,
And sing some low voluptuous lay,
While heaven embalms in fragrant light
The pulsing fountain's sifting spray:
The warm wind tunes its breath to ours,
While souls of echo, near and far,
Shall speed our song to Love, whose bowers
Sparkle in yonder Summer star.

Twilight Song.

I.

Here, from the casement, in the dusk
Of rushy thatch that glooms above,
We'll gaze upon the sunset sea;
While every tendril droops with musk—
While every wind comes winged with love,
Like spicy gales from Araby.

II.

Sweet, what is Love—this trance divine?
'Tis when thy spirit, on its portal,
Entertains my soul its guest;
'Tis when thy heart forsakes its shrine,
And, flying to a home immortal,
Folds its wings within my breast.

III.

I would not change this home of thine,
Though waiting wide some domed palace
Shone upon the hills of noon;
Nor pledge with Kings thy love in wine,
Though pearls were melted in the chalice,
Golden as yon summer moon.

IV.

Yet could some Magian mould this heart
Into a goblet bright; and make it
Glow with ruby like thy lip,
To thee I'd kiss its rim, and part—
Yes, give it thee to keep or break it,
Dearest, after one sweet sip.

An Antique Dream.

PART FIRST.

NYMPH AND SATYR.

I.

On the blue summer hills, under a vine,
Leave me to dream of the Forms that around them
Piped leafy melodies, pressed the red wine,
And garlanded lutes for the Satyrs to sound them.

II.

Up from the gloom of the forested valley,
Where the first planet is glimmering palely,
Leaving the nymph group to dance and to dally,
One through the flowers is wandering gaily.

III.

White-bearded, rosy-eyed, hoofed at the limb,
Under one hairy arm clutching a cymbal;
While on his slender horns, pointed and prim,
He settles the ivy-wreath airily nimble.

IV.

Now to a plat of acanthus he's come,
And, stretching at length, on the low gloaming gazes;

While, like the blue heat-mist that films on the plum,
A drowsy web over his glossy eye hazes.

V.

By a clear forest well, dim in the droop
Of pendulous summer fruit, crimson and yellow,
Pressing the deep moss, repose the nymph group,
'Mid slips of the leafy lights wavering mellow.

VI.

Over each slender waist, draped in furr'd skin,
Fruitage-stained bosoms are balmily heaving;
While o'er the pool, amid flowers peeping in,
Their wild glowing ringlets are drooping and weaving.

VII.

Swooning along through the star-lighted boughs,
The wind lifts the leaves into whispers, and passes—
As, lapp'd in low slumber, their small snowy brows
Are silkily touched by the long, slender grasses.

VIII.

But hark! as the tempest hums up the grey sea,
Start they awake by that sweet well of quiet;
Their being is bound with each dark groaning tree,
And each wails in the wind as she shelters anigh it.

IX.

Their sweet eyes are raised as the great shadows move
Through the awed depths of heaven, in a worshipful trance;
Where the lion-browed monarch, majestical Jove,
Takes the breadth of the world in his sovereign glance.

X.

Redly the forked fire splits on each bough!
Gusts the great rain in a tempested volley!
'Tis past—and the sound of their song rises now
'Mid the plash from the drippings of myrtle and holly.

XI.

But as the rare dawn o'er the ivy-trailed mound
Comes glimmering goldenly into their tresses,
They scatter the olive leaves over the ground;
While one with a garland the green altar dresses.

XII.

Sweetly their low-dittied music is heard,
As through the rayed harp-strings their white fingers quiver;
Clear as the voice of the passion-tongued bird,
That sings on a tree o'er some moon-lighted river.

XIII.

And now in the green of the oak's glooming eaves
Spread they the food for the feast of the morn;
Wine-vase and honey-cup lie in the leaves,
As Satyrs come dancing with fruits on each horn.

XIV.

One from a snowy Nymph snatches the lyre;
While round him his brothers, half-jocund, half-fawning,
With dim, sultry glances steal nigher and nigher,
As he chimes his loud chant through the depths of the dawning:

SATYRS' SONG.

I.

Oh, 'tis sweet to be a god
Dancing on the dainty sod;
Sleeping by the twisted vines,
Singing where the large moon shines.
Earth's a heaven to the spirits
Who can spy its rosy merits:
Passes day in joyous moving—
Passes night in feast and loving!
Follow us—follow us—

Where the fruited woods are bending—
Where the sunny stream is tending;
Where the life-sounds, faint retreating,
Let us hear our bosoms' beating—
Follow us—follow us.

II.

In a forest far away,
Peeps a fountain, plashing spray:
There, amid the trailers looping,
Fig, and gourd, and grape are drooping;
There the honey-dews are shedding—
There the violet beds are spreading—
Follow us—follow us.
There are flowers to weave your tresses—
Flowers to answer love's sweet guesses:
Stars the scented sky enchanting,
Pulsing to our bosoms' panting—
Follow us—follow us.

PART SECOND.

A HAMLET EVENING OF OLD.

I.

Broad spreads the plain to the mountains that surge,
Based on the pastures, and spired in the snow—
Billows that hang on the world's weary verge,
And heave their white crests in the clear, level glow.

II.

Speckled with villages, yellow'd with corn,
Spaces the lowland with rivers that run
Eastward, and flash in the fires of the morn,
Like pathways of gods leading up to the sun.

III.

Summer is fled, and the last golden days
Of Autumn look silently back o'er the plain,
And, brooding with hazy and lingering rays,
Perfume the deep grape and the dry, ruddy grain.

IV.

And now, o'er the shores of the forest that lie
Lapped in the mist of the mouldering leaves,
Glitters the slender crook'd moon in the sky,
Like a sickle of light o'er the dry harvest sheaves!

V.

Here, from the log-builded hamlet, this even',
Drifts the sweet altar-smoke over the tillage;
Here the sweet altar-songs, rising to heaven,
Bear in their music the prayers of the village.

VI.

Wheat, rose, and apple-bloom scatter the ground,
As gifts to the gods in the season of drought;
While husbandmen, dusk with the sun, kneel around,
And pray for the soft, sifting rains of the south.

VII.

Lo! as the fruit in the sacrifice-fire
Is hissing in crumpled and smouldering ashes,
With solemn-timed paces the white priest draws nigher,
And pours the pure wine on the wavering flashes.

VIII.

The folk who have circled the shrine veer away,
As their orisons soar the pale heaven afar,
And cast timid looks in the lapse of the day
To the god-peopled distance of silence and star.

IX.

Still by the barns, where the yellow goats lie,
The children are stretch'd on the grain-loosen'd sheaves,
And in the rude street, as their fathers pass by,
Stand feeding the mild bull with handfuls of leaves.

X.

From dusk apple-orchards the girls issue forth;
Their baskets are crowned from the crimsoning heap;
And they guess by the stars shooting over the north
Of the swain who shall bring each a cottage and sheep.

XI.

Now, o'er the low valley wide silence and dark
Fall slowly; scarce heard are the leaf-hidden rills;
And the vague night-winds rise with the stars' misty spark,
And mournfully sing in the ears of the hills.

XII.

The bleak hazels rustle, the flocks dimly bleat,
The shepherds are gone till the streak of the morn;
And the blue rushy river, o'erhazed with the heat,
Flows low towards the moon in a stillness forlorn.

XIII.

Now sails the black crow-line along the dim verge
Of the still-lighted west, that will darken full soon;
Now the crone culls the herbs by the river's dead marge,
Where the white poplar looms like a ghost in the moon.

XIV.

And, wearily plodding along the dark road,
The brown woodman comes—see, his worn hatchet shines!
While the dusk air around, as he heaves down his load,
Is heavy with scent of the fresh-cloven pines.

XV.

Now spits the green bough in the smoke-blended flame,
As he murmurs old tales of the gods of the earth;
While his fear-pallid urchin and wonder-eyed dame
Are huddled together beside the bright hearth.

XVI.

Soon the olive and milk of the feast are laid by,
And shines his rude face in the crimsoning heat,
As his child gazes up at his labour-dim eye,
And plays with his languid hand, stretched at his feet.

XVII.

But when the deep midnight is awesome around,
And sets in the sick mist the wan, weary moon,
And dim meteors fall, and sleep breathes from the ground—
Hark! they sing to the night-god an old slumbrous tune.

HEARTH SONG.

I.

Spirit of the half-closed eyes,
Pacing to a drowsy tune,
Come to me ere midnight wanes—
Come with all thy dreamy trains,
Scattering o'er me poppy rains;
Dropping me, 'mid weary sighs,
Deep into a feather'd swoon:
Leave thy odorous bed an hour—
Leave thy ebon-curtain'd bower—
Leave thy cavern to the moon.
Lowly burns the whiten'd hearth—
Slowly moves the quiet earth.
Now that woods and skies are dumb
In the dizzy midnight hum,
Come to me, sweet Phantom, come.

II.

Hidden in a fold away
Of thy garment, bear the urn

Full of Lethe's unsunn'd streams;
Bring the flowers that live in dreams—
Bring the Boy* who often seems
On the earth with me to stray,
When the weary planets burn,
In a cloud of shifting light,
Through the hollow life of night,
Mimicking the scene of day:
Ye are coming nigher, nigher,
With my song I seem to tire;
I can hear thy pinion's hymn
Round my faint ear's closing rim—
Ye are coming, phantoms dim!

The Minstrel's Appointment.

I.

The other even I walked a mile
To the moonlit steep a-south of the Isle,
To meet three white little Spirits of light
Who come with the first star over the sea,
To whisper and sing to the listening
Of their lonely friend, an old Vine tree.

II.

I carried an ozier basket, brimmed
With grapes and nectarines purple rimm'd,

* Morpheus, represented by the ancients as a Boy.

And odour buds from the myrtle woods
Whither I wandered that same day,
And my old lute, that waited mute
To sing to their dance beside the bay.

III.

Scarce had I erosed the belts of sand
That yellowy gird the low woodland,
When, by the well in the grapey dell,
I caught their song on the autumn wind;
Another second, and all three beaconed,
While shook with joy the tree behind.

IV.

As by the old vine's twisted root
I scattered the festal bunches of fruit,
The moon-born Three danced up on my knee,
And kissed my forehead, and stroked my hair—
"Oh! blessings roll upon thee, good soul,
For these bright flowers, and fruitage rare."

V.

Then down 'mid the crisp leaves sat we four,
And spread the feast on the scented floor:
Tore in two each grape bunch blue,
And piled them by us with many a laugh;
Thrust the blossoms into our bosoms,
And cleft each rare red peach in half.

VI.

Oh! how they plied their pearly teeth
Through crimson pulp and pippin sheath,
  Their fingers stained with the drops that rained
From bloomy grape and nectarine rare;
  Of apple sweet, of quince they eat,
And the gritty grain of the juicy pear.

VII.

Gaily this wondrous feast went on;
The old vine murmured, the old moon shone;
  The three spirits white stepped into the light
To dance a starry measure divine;
  "Pause yet awhile," I said, with a smile,
And drew from my vesture a chalice of wine.

VIII.

Up in the moonlight their fingers they flung,
Snapt them with joyance, carolled and sung:
  "A health unto thee and the old vine tree"
Rung through the air in silvery chorus;
  "His wine is sweet, but a daintier treat,
Minstrel, from thy sweet lute's before us."

IX.

"What shall my song be, blithesome sprites?
Such as I dittied on bygone nights—
  'The Fate of the Star?' 'Too mournful far?'

'The Song of the Forest, or Song of the Sea?' "
But all cried out with a merry shout,
"Oh, friend, let us ask the Old Vine Tree."

X.

Then round his twisted trunk they twined,
And patted his bark so wrinkled and blind.
"Touch not that bough beside you now,"
The old voice said in a querulous whine—
"'Tis been half dead since Summer's fled:"—
Ho! ho! the cross, old, gouty vine!

XI.

"But pile the moss around my feet,
And let me feel the sunset's heat;
Then sing, sing away, as best you may,
The praise of the grape I've reared so pure;
Though I may be loth to tell of the growth,
The Minstrel knows their worth, be sure."

XII.

Then jocund grew our friend, though old,
And purple laughters o'er him rolled
As he shook to the feet with his own conceit,
And winked a sly old leaf or two;
The while I took from a mossy nook
My lute, and sung as I sing to you.

THE VINE SONG.

The grape is the only fruit of the skies:
'Tis suckled with dew in the springtime bright;
Then, lapped in leaves, awhile it lies,
To learn their songs in the evening light.
Crimson sunsets lend it a hue—
Airs of summer, being and breath;
Under the heaven's palace of blue
None that drink of it dream of death.

In each grape there dwells a sprite,
Born of fancy, pleasure, and light;
Every bubble that sparks the bowl
Holds in its dome a starry soul.
Then would you think
Like a spirit, drink—
Drink, drink of the joyous wine,
Up to the brain,
Again and again,
Those wits of the stars shall mount and shine.

Lovers, shed your happiest smiles
Under the vine where'er you go.
The tendrils shoot like passion's wiles,
The blushes under their shadows glow.
Friends, who around the bright hearth sing,
Pray by the vine where'er you roam,
That friendship, like his arms, may cling
For ever around the walls of home.

Poets, looking through fancy's glass
Round the world for beauty and light,
Wheresoever the day you pass,
Under some old vine rest at night.
Every bough shall guard their guest,
And bend to his lip their rosiest wine;
And every leaf that lulls to rest
Shall fill your spirits with dreams divine.

Oh! when this heart has ceased to blow,
Oh! when its love has failed to burn,
Scatter it still in its wit-bright glow
Into some cup's funereal urn:
Songs and smiles that charmed and shone
Over its bright brim many a night,
Murmuring yet of pleasures gone,
Shall charm its rest with echo and light.

XIII.

As thus we chirped, the moon among
The red leaves listened to our song,
And touched the sprites with gentle lights,
Well pleased within her silver mind—
The while our Tree all joyously
Kept time with his topmast branch in the wind.

XIV.

Then came our dance. On a plot of moss,
Golden with Autumn's silken gloss,

The little ones stood in jubilant mood,
As I tinkled the first light music bars—
Then pattered their feet like silvery sleet,
And twinkled their eyes like woodland stars.

XV.

But brief was the life of our new delight,
For far away in the purple night,
As they daintily hopp'd, a blue star dropp'd,
And chimed the hour on the distant sea:
Farewell, farewell! that fairy bell
Put a close to our dance and minstrelsy.

XVI.

I saw them leap the foamy strand,
Where fluttered the waves on the breezy sand,
And oft look back on the shining track
That dappled the calm of ocean grey;
Even heard their hymn, 'till they dwindled dim
As a sprinkle of starlight far away.

XVII.

Oh! then, with pleased and pensive brow,
I kissed the old vine's drowsy bough;
But with leaflets closed my comrade dozed;
So home through the meadowy path I turned,
Where, steady and bright,
My candle's light
In the ivied window redly burned.

Winter Life and Scenery.

Bare Winter owns the earth at last;
The white sun rises late and slow,
With scatter'd fires, and breathes the blast
Bitterly from the hills of snow:
The world is dumb, the stream is dead,
The dim shrubs shiver by the pane,
And sounds, as from some aged brain,
Swoon from the poplar overhead.
Yet, though chill clouds of morning grey
Around our lonely roof are rolled,
From wintry day we'll turn away,
Nor heed, by yonder hearth, the cold.

Come, Mary, close beside me rest,
While flames the cheery crackling hearth;
The while our pleasant morning guest
Shall gossip stories of the earth:
Here shall we read of mighty wars
That tyrants glory to renew—
Great struggles of the good and true—
Wild voyages under foreign stars:

The world has still its faery tale;
Still new Alladins search for gold;—
Hark! it is but the wandering gale,
Tapping the pane with fingers cold.

A walk?—yes, through the clear-aired day,
Still facing southward let us go,
Where spreads the quiet sky away
In slips, like blue lakes in the snow.
The land is dark, the forests sigh—
See yonder branch, all ledged with sleet,
The numb bird clasps with tiny feet,
And chirps a little shivering cry.
Ah! bleakly breathes the bitter air;
Come, Mary, by the woods we'll hold;
The woods shall yield, though grey and bare,
A kindly shelter from the cold.

All day beneath the sullen sky
Some mighty Presence labours round;
The sunlight glimmers dolefully,
The leaves are starched along the ground:
Blank sounds the gunshot through the air
In frosted fields and fens beyond,
And, dumb beside the harden'd pond,
The cattle stand with piteous stare:—

But though the season, wild and bleak,
Swathes earth in many a snowy fold,
Yet, Mary sweet, your chilly cheek
It only rosies o'er with cold.

Hark! now from yonder bosky mounds
Echoes the clear hilarious horn!
In circles yelp the spotted hounds
In empty fields all stubble-shorn:
The jocund huntsmen gallop forth
'Mid slanting drifts of pelting hail,
And, bending, breast the icy gale
Set in with noon from the blue north:—
Press closer, closer to my side;
In muffling mist the sun has rolled,
The frost-ghost wanders far and wide,
The sky is dark, the world is cold.

Yet oft we paced o'er this old walk,
With summer moss beneath our feet,
When o'er the moor the shepherd's flock
Drowsed in the heavy evening heat;
And drifted past the cottage eaves,
As crimson dusk crept o'er the flood,
From the red bonfire in the wood,
The sweet faint scent of burning leaves:

Oft then, as through the quiet trees
The sunset streamed in shafts of gold,
We sighed for one sweet temperate breeze
To freshen earth with norland cold.

Now turn we, as the sun aloof
Strikes o'er the level earth the while,
And on our distant cottage roof
Burns with a parting yellow smile.
The numb wind wanders in a swoon
From the far cloud line puffed with snow,
And coldly, coldly breathes below
The thin light of the dim day-moon.
Pace quick—the stars look icy bright;
Pace quick, and close the mantle fold,
For, lo! our little window's light
Beacons us homeward from the cold.

Night rises o'er the desolate scene,
The crows push through the darkness blind;
The children play on the village-green,
Their voices lost in whirls of wind.
List!—how the wintry storm-march hums
Along the space of shadowing floods;
In the hollow clouds beyond the woods
We hear them beat their dolorous drums:

Ah! this shall be a piteous night
For wanderers over sea and wold;—
Our little porch is hooded white,
The ice-drops glitter in the cold.

Come, pile the fire, bring forth the books,
Gay song, and southern sweet romance;
Let harvest-groups, with joyous looks,
Beneath the walnut's shadows dance.
In this old tome a wand we've found,
To change to youth the winter's age:—
As thy light fingers turn the page,
The heavy world shall roll around;
So read me tales of tropic days,
By some brown, bright-eyed traveller told,
Till o'er the palms we seem to gaze
Beneath some sultry curtain's fold.

Still here, through winter white and bleak,
By this lone cottage-hearth we'll dwell,
While round the shores the surges break,
While tolls at night the tempest-bell.
Dear home affection, pure and true,
Shall light the little space we're given,—
And though Love's world is wide as heaven,
My Mary, yet it holds but two;

So, pillowed heart to heart, we'll sing,
While beats the rain and blows the cold—
Till crocus playmates of the Spring
In shelter'd corners bloom in gold.

The Poor Poet to his Verses.

A WINTER SONG.

I.

Come to my fireside. Sing to me to-night,
Poor Verses, echoes of my vanished years;
Though all unknown to fame and fortune's light,
My heart still guards you with its smiles and tears.
Old memories, though in jarring music sung,
And rough to other ears, still sweet to mine;
Your voice recalls the days when I was young,
And morning makes the dullest things divine.
Sing, Verses, sing! the night is dark and cold;
Sing, though your voices gain but little gold.

II.

Rise, Scenes of Banquet, flashing far and wide,
Your chambers silvered from the fountain's rain!
Pace proudly forward, Prince and beaming bride,
And let the Minstrels sound their richest strain!—

Alas! that feast, so fragrant and so prime,
With meats and wines was coloured hue on hue,
When one good dinner in the Lenten time
Made me plethoric for a day or two:
Sing by my fireside, as in days of old,
Poor Singing Children gain but little gold.

III.

Come, Faery fancies, breathing of the moon,
Dance, little Elves, through your enchanted bowers!
In some dim garret rose the airy tune
That timed your tiny footsteps o'er the flowers.
Soar, daring Songs of Liberty and Right,
Let Tyrants tremble!—but, awhile be still,
For in the landlady's sour face to-night
The rent seemed scrawled as blank as in her bill:
Sing by my ear—but be not loud or bold—
Poor Singing Children gain but little gold.

IV.

Rise, Strains of Passion, from the twilight land,
Where Lovers pace along the glimmering stream,
And whisper low, and press the parting hand,
And homeward wander in a happy dream.
Ah, where is she who woke my earliest lay,
Whose fearless faith was mine for woe or weal?
Along the noisy streets but yesterday
Her carriage splashed me o'er from head to heel:

Sing, Verses, by my hearth—*that* tale is old,
Poor Singing Children gain but little gold.

V.

Dear lonely offspring of a lonely heart,
No rich saloon resounds with your acclaim;
No eager student wafts you from the mart,
Or critic stings you with an epigram;
Beside me rest, concealed from stranger minds,
Content if some old comrade, loved and known,
Lists to your lay by evening light, and finds
Within your soul some tremblings of his own.
Sing, Little Ones, and round me closer fold,
Such Singing Children gain but little gold.

VI.

Yes, we have wandered heart by heart, unseen,
Round foreign shores, and through the ocean's blast,
Far from the memoried Isle whose fields of green
Sleep in the spectral stillness of the past:
Oft, oft, when far away, I've looked through tears
Into the dying light that o'er them shone;
Where all I loved amid the happier years,
Where all save you who sing of them are gone.
Sing, Memories, sing—the heart that can behold
Heaven in the sunset little heeds its gold.

The Little Bard.

I.

There is a little bard, as gay
As a merry star, who lives away
From earth and all its quarrels;
Musing o'er earth, its rights and wrongs,
He puts his wisdom in his songs;
Nor cares a fig for fame, somehow,
When his little mistress wreathes his brow;
But cries, when crown'd, "Now shall I sing,
Now shall I sing,
Now shall I sing,
Like a nightingale in laurels—
In laurels, love, in laurels—
Like a nightingale in laurels."

II.

Though not the tiniest coin, they say,
Is in his purse, I've seen him pay
In joke for all his blisses;
Now in a sip of purest wine,
Now pulling some rich rose divine,

He'd place within her milky palm,
With earnest face of frolic calm,
Three little leaves, or four, and say—
"'Tis thus I pay,
'Tis thus I pay,
'Tis thus I pay for kisses—
With rose leaves, sweet, with rose leaves—
'Tis thus I pay for kisses."

III.

His rosy mistress, decked with vine,
Carries his lute and urn of wine,
As in Autumn days he wanders
By heathy hills and lonely dells,
By orchard walls and village wells;
And when he stops to note his lore,
The twilight folk around some door
Gossip in whispers, "Look! look!
In the leafy nook,
O'er his tiny book,
How the little poet ponders—
O'er dreams divine, of love and wine,
Our own sweet songster ponders."

IV.

When winter whitens all the earth,
He sits before his cosy hearth,
Where the crickets, too, are singing;

And by his side, with sparkling looks,
Sweet Jenny piles the learned books,
To keep the piercing wind away,
To keep his winter fancy gay;
And by his ear says tenderly,
"Oh, let me see,
Oh, let me see,
What sweet pearls you've been stringing—
Been stringing, love, been stringing—
This live long day you're stringing."

V.

Far off the people fight betimes;
He quarrels but with stubborn rhymes
That will not take their places;
Nor ever feels a touch of ire,
Save when he scatters to the fire
Some teasing verse that mocks his care;
While Jenny, too, in deep despair,
Kissing him cries, and holds his pen,
"Oh, try again,
Oh, try again,
For those naughty airs and graces—
With patience, love, with patience,
They're sure to take their places."

VI.

Once, in a mournful mood, he said,
"Love, when my minstrel light has fled

From the star that heavenward bore me,
Come to my tomb when sunset heaves
The west in drifts of golden leaves;
Then, as you silent stand and sigh,
The stars alone your company,
My voice shall sound to you alone,
"Though I am gone,
Though I am gone,
My pretty songs sing o'er me—
Sing o'er me, love, sing o'er me—
My love, and my songs sing o'er me."

The Faerie's Child.

I.

Amid the nut grove, still and brown,
The Faerie's Child is walking.
List, list, as the leaves come down,
To the sprites around her talking.
Along the windy, waving grass
Their evening whispers breathe and pass:
From yon aged bending bough
Their leafy language floats below;

And now o'erhead in the air 'tis streaming.
Oh! who can tell what things she hears—
What secrets of the faery spheres,
That fill her eyes with silent tears!
Sweet wandering fancy-charmed child,
With cheek so pale, and eyes so wild.
Oh! what shall come of this lonely dreaming!

II.

Down by the sun-dry harvest road,
Through quiet evening's hours,
She paces with her scented load
Of late-year moss and flowers.
Blooms from the wood of every hue,
Moon pale, purple, jet, and blue;
Woven in bunches, and lightly press'd
Upon her simple, snowy breast,
And through the brown locks wildly tressed
Nodding in crownlets o'er her.
And, lo! as the cloud on ocean's brim
With moonlight has enriched its rim,
A quaint wild shape, with kindly eyes,
And a smile like a star of the distant skies,
Goes tripping along the path before her.

III.

Now by her pillow, small and white,
'Mid faded leaflets lying,

An eager star, like a taper light,
O'er the curtain's edge is spying.
The scent of the broom-buds fills the room ;
The window is full of the bare blue gloom,
And by the low hearth ashily sinking,
Half asleep is the faery winking.
Out in the air there comes a sound
Of music eddying round and round
The ivied chimnies—swooning near
The glassy pane, and streaming clear
As moonlight into the litle ear,
Like a shell in brown weed gleaming;
And, just as the first bird, mounted high
On the sycamore's tinkling canopy,
Sings to the first red streak of day,
Her soul with the faeries speeds away,
O'er field, and stream, and hamlet grey,
Where the weary folk are dreaming.

Antique Glimpses.

I.

Grey-faced Spirit! let us sit—
Sit and muse an hour with thee,
While before our visioned eyes
Something of the past may rise;
Rise, and live again, and flit
As through a sphere of alchemy:

II.

Come, then, jocund firstling, come,
Mounted on thy milky goat;
Dusky form, with Indian brow,
We can hear thy piping now,
Cheerful as the cricket's hum,
Along the sunny silence float.

III.

Beside thy path a ruddy shape
Chants snatches of old song divine;
While slyest lights amid his hair
Are sliding, as in thickets there,
With head thrown back upon a vine,
He lips the purple drooping grape.

IV.

And who art thou, and who art thou,
With viny ringlets down thy neck?
We know thee too, thou rosy, coy,
Low-lisping, lithe Idalian boy;
No marvel that thy beauties' beck
Should draw the nymphs to kiss thy brow.

V.

Who follows next? The winged girl
Who loved thee, roving by thy side
In balsam breathings through the May
Of many a lonely amber day,
When she would wreathe thy locks, and hide
Her blushes in some golden curl.

VI.

Come, Nayad, draped in woven weeds,
And dripping lillies of the stream;
Sweet image! o'er thy wat'ry cheek
The sunlight plays in touches meek,
And, slanting o'er the level meads
Crowns thy cold forehead with its beam.

VII.

Hark! from yon temple nigh the shore,
Piled high with many a marble shaft,

There comes a rush of wings, and, lo!
A shape mercurial, white as snow,
Winks at the towns he hurries o'er,
From close-capp'd brow of wit and craft.

VIII.

See, by yon Autumn river's drift,
Slow curving round the fields of corn,
Its red-faced god, with rushes crowned,
Sits by the windless bank, embrowned
With fallen leaves, and seems to lift
And faintly blow his wreathed horn.

IX.

But who is this that seems to pass
Like music from the noon-white sky?
What form of beauty, grace, and bloom,
From yonder bower of myrtle gloom,
Comes floating o'er the sun-warm grass,
In soft Olympian majesty?

X.

Ah! who could miss thy name, though screened
In golden clouds thou movest thus,
With blossomed mouth, and breath of musk,
And eyes as sweet as summer dusk,
And breast with tremulous azure veined,
Like vase of white convolvulus?

XI.

Oft in yon sunset's banquet space
The radiant ranks of Deity
Feel their immortal pulses throng
With lonesome tumult, when thy song
Fountains the stillness, and that face
Looks earthward o'er the splendrous sea!

XII.

But, while we muse, the wintry god
Who moves the winds and floods the springs,
With saddened face, grey as the thaw
And beard of icicle and snow,
Above the distant lonely road
Sails silently on wat'ry wings.

XIII.

And on yon desolate summit, curled
In cloud above the wave and blast,
Deject in dreams of lost command,
A group of old gods, solemn and grand,
Look mournfully across the world,
Ere melting lightward in the vast.

The Robin.

I.

Amid the ivy on the tomb
The Robin sings his winter song,
Full of cheerful pity;
Deep grows the evening gloom,
Dim spreads the snows along,
And sounds the slowly tolling bell from the silent city.
Sing, sweet Robin, sing
To One that lies below;
Few hearts are warm above the snow
As that beneath thy wing;
So sing, sweet, sing
All about the coming Spring.

II.

When Summer, with hay-scented breath,
Shall come the mountains over,
Sing, Robin, through the valley,
Above the tufts of flowering heath,
And o'er the honied clover,
Where many a bronz'd and humming bee shall voyage musically;

Sing, brown spirit, sing
Each Summer evening
When I am far away;
I know not one I'd wish so near
The dust I love as thou, sweet dear;
So sing, sweet, sing
Still, still about the coming Spring.

Serenaders of Sevilla.

I.

Through balconied street and moonlit square—
By silent statued column—
We Serenaders sing through the air
Of the Spanish night
That, blue and bright,
Fringes the cork-tree leaves with light,
And silvers the fountain's volume.
The sky is streaming with Autumn stars,
And the moon on the sea is rounding
To the tinkling chime of our wild guitars,
And the golden viol's sounding!

II.

Haste, comrades, haste to the streamlet's side,
Where the orange grove gilds the water;
In a trellised casement o'er the tide,
With cheek of bloom,
In curtain'd gloom,
Alone in the hush of her moonlit room,
Rests Sevilla's rarest daughter!
Under the trees, through leaves and stars,
Let 's pace, with bosoms bounding,
To the tinkling tone of our quick guitars,
And the golden viol's sounding.

III.

Lo! now from the heathy hill we see
The brown, sheep-drifted Prada;
Beneath, the town, with its minstrelsy,
Fades in the blaze
Of the dizzying rays,
And the clear wind breathes o'er the moorland's haze
From the snows of the white Nevada:—
Sing, sing aloud to the sparkling stars;
With love our hearts are bounding,
And tenderly tinkle the wild guitars
To the sumptuous viol sounding.

IV.

See, how the moon, on the river space,
Under her easement lingers!
Oh! Love, could I watch her beauteous face,
Like the trusted light
Of the moon to-night,
As she draws aside her curtain slight
With tremulous almond fingers!
Shine through her chamber, moon and stars,
By roof and lattice rounding,
And tenderly tinkle, ye soft guitars,
'Mid the golden viol's sounding.

V.

The blind withdraws to the small, white hand—
One look through the vine is gleaming;
'Tis gone—and lost in the night we stand—
But away, away,
Till dawn of day,
That smile, like Autumn's dusky ray,
Will light our spirit's dreaming:
Back to the town—the setting stars
Are dimly seaward rounding;
Silently hang our sad guitars,
And stilled is the viol's sounding.

Alice, the Nun.

I.

Beside the ivied window nook
In the grey Convent's western tower
Sits Sister Alice, with a book
Of holy thoughts before her laid,
And memory as clear of shade
As this sweet summer evening hour.

II.

She rests her head upon her hand,
Blue veinèd as the slenderest shell
Upon the ocean's moonlit strand:
Her lips are fresh and rich of hue,
As pure and chaste as ruddy dew
Upon the lily's drooping bell.

III.

Beneath her snowy vestal hood
There streams a wave of gentle gold:
Pale is her cheek with virgin blood,
Refined by meditation's light,
Like the spring crescent, April bright,
Amid her vaporous mantle's fold.

IV.

She sees the town's dim line afar—
Her nearest glimpse of earthly shores—
Beneath the steady evening star:
While from the Chapel underneath
The cedar scent of incense breath
Floats up the twilight corridors.

V.

Ofttimes, her duties o'er, the while
She looks along the world's domain
As from a happy summer isle:
There 'mid the brown of furrowed soil
The peasant speeds his weary toil
By distant hillocks blue with rain.

VI.

High o'er the stretch of hazy lands,
Beside its skirt of forest trees,
With sultry porch the Castle stands:
The grey air drowses round the noon,
Untoned, save by the flouting tune
Of lazy banner on the breeze.

VII.

At night, the turrets are a-flame,
And revel redly lights the board:
Vain life flits through its narrow fame,

And, passing, leaves no sign beneath,
Save in the Lady's wither'd wreath,
Or broken wine cup of the Lord.

VII.

At noon, at eve, in hours of rest
A world of pictures pass her by;
The river floating to the west,
Beneath dark crescents of a bridge;
Deep woods along the mountain ridge,
Dim ruins in the crimson sky.

IX.

At eve she sees the peasants come,
With faces glittering in the glow,
Down through the old mill's dusty hum;
Or pausing by the village well,
While tolls the lowly twilight bell,
And woodward blackly sails the crow.

X.

Ofttimes, in raptured musings cast,
Her soul recalls the days that beamed
In glory through the pagan past;
When all the earth was roll'd in war,
Ere Christ's white revelation star
Along the shepherd valleys streamed.

XI.

Oft by the shrine of pious saint,
When darkness roofs the level dawn,
She kneels in silence, breathing faint
With adoration of the Good;
While round, great shadows glide and brood,
And morning glitters cold and wan.

XII.

In tranced hours of calm divine
Old voices murmur through the night
Along the distant gleaming brine;
Old figures tread the tracts of air
O'er famished fields, and spaces where
Some blue star sheds its thinnest light

XIII.

Oft by her casement's gloried pane,
Her cheek with spirit-vigil worn,
Earth and old sorrow seem to wane;
When, upon fresh eternal wings,
The resurrection sunlight springs
Above the skies of Easter morn!

XIV.

Hark! how afar the slow bell tolls
In the grey drowse of th' evening clouds!
Now pious rite for parted souls

Is uttering; but, so light her tread,
She angers not the chapeled dead,
A-listening in their frosted shrouds.

XV.

And now the hour of twilight prayer
Sounds from the belfry o'er the land.
Beside the lamp-lit altar there,
With worship-wistful eyes upraised,
In raptured calm her soul is mazed,
While round her the White Sisters stand.

XVI.

White stand the wintry Sisterhood,
Like cypress trees engarbed in snow—
Still mute in their pure, prayerful mood,
As scarcely yet returned from Heaven;
To Alice each a kiss has given—
Like rain their lips have touched her brow.

XVII.

At last, within her linen'd nest,
She lies beneath the latticed leaves
That fall moon-shadow'd o'er her rest:
Sleep comes with prayer: deep heaven broods
Above the breadth of balmy woods—
The splendrous rim of ocean heaves!

XVIII.

God fills the lustrous void around,
And closer meets the wakeful eye,
When mortals slumber without sound;
God breathes upon each peaceful heart
That rests in solitude apart
Beneath His blue immensity.

XIX.

Oh, happy life remote from ill!
Oh, life whose sacred tenor rolls
On to its peaceful Heaven, still
And bright, 'mid sympathies for all
Who breathe around this starry ball—
'Mid loving prayers for vanished souls.

XX.

Oh, happy life enshrined in good,
Secure in calm, removed afar
From all the shocks of brain and blood—
The smile of fortune's fulsome eye,
The bitterness of enmity,
The vain world's hollow peace or war!

XXI.

Yes, little Alice, once so wild
With play, beneath the bronzing noon,
Is grown the Old Sky's foster child,

All chilly changed—an orbed light
Amid the holy calm of night
Moving the heart-wave like a moon.

The Forester.

I.

I am but a woodland fellow,
One that loves the morning air,
Or sitting lone at sunset mellow,
Free from labour, free from care;
Health's sufficient wealth for me,
And day and night—variety.

II.

In spring time I love to wander
When my woodland work is over,
By the singing hedges yonder,
Townward, through the fields of clover,
There to hear 'mid cups renewing
What the distant world is doing.

III.

Summer time is idlest weather
Long drawn, quiet, bright days bringing.
When I stretch in purple heather
While the hill wind wafts the ringing
Of the sheep bells—dreamy inklings
Of their far-off fitful tinklings.

IV.

Or I hear the gay grasshopper
Panting in the sultry grass;
On his shuttle-pulse a stopper
Puts he, as he hears me pass,
While, beside the fields of hay,
Sings the cuckoo all the day.

V.

From the quarry grey and glaring
Foams a cascade to the stream;
Where, knee deep and dumbly staring,
Stands the heavy mottled team;
The cow-boy asks the hour, and stretches
Yawning on a heap of vetches.

VI.

Soon comes Autumn, warm and hazy,
Camping in the yellow fields;
Through the branchy orchard strays he,
Ruddying the bough that yields;

While, in barns I work and laugh,
Threshing in a mist of chaff.

VII.

But soon comes the wind, and urges
Up the crispy clouds of frost,
Or on hills they rest like surges
By the level rain-drifts crossed;
Then, at leaden eve, one hears
The rainy roar of swollen weirs.

VIII.

Winter is my time for toiling,
From the late dawn bare and grey
Unto windy night, despoiling
The last leaves that downward stray;
Drifting in each gust, and shedding
Noiseless o'er the path I'm treading.

IX.

With my damp and heavy loading
I plod through the grey woods mourning,
Waters roar, and skies are boding,
But—my cottage fire is burning—
What care I for toil or mire
When seated by my broad red fire?

X.

Then, some doleful ditty chanting,
Dear old times my memory brings me,
And old faces—that are wanting;
Still my heart their story sings me,
While through the pane shines in a star
Pointing where the lost ones are.

XI.

Thus my life is onward flowing,
Rest and labour alternating;
Spring has kissed the Summer glowing,
Winter is for Autumn waiting,
And beside me stands the Tree
That yet will shade me leafily.

Artists' Song of Motley.

I.

"Genial comrades, tried and true,
Why do you pace the crowded way
In motly humour and garb to-day?
Genial comrades, poor and true,
Many of settled and sombre hue
Hurry to fortune—why not you?"

II.

"Give us the motley's coat alone,
Cheaply purchased, careless worn,
Easily patched, if soiled or torn.
Yes, give us the motley's coat alone,
That glitters gaily under the sun,
With twenty colours for custom's one.

III.

Give us the genial, motley mind,
Mirroring all that meets its glass,
Prince and peasant, lad and lass,
Give us the genial, motley mind
That spies the light where others are blind,
That plucks the pippin through core and rind.

IV.

The world is wide and heavenly hued
With seasons scattering sun and snow,
Through day and dark, through joy and woe.
The world is wide and wondrous hued,
And draws for ever its happiest mood
From change, bright essence of all its good.

V.

Cared by the kindly Destiny,
An Arab group, we tread through Time,
On to the verge of Being's clime:
And live and love, and think and die:
Heaven, when it clouds the starry sky,
Kindles some fire fly's lamp anigh.

VI.

Long have we left the worldly war
Of glossed convention's casts and creeds:
Our hearts are all our title deeds.
Yes, we have left their worldly war
To live with the youth of the world afar,
In green woods under the dawning star.

VII.

Still for the spirit that rests its cares
On Heaven, and yields its joys below,
Some star will smile, some heart will glow;
Still for the spirit free from cares,

This brown world rolls in golden airs,
'Mid songs of birds, and peaceful prayers.

VIII.

For Culture only breathes our soul,
And grasps the powers that round it lie
To master future destiny;
For culture only breathes our soul
That man may read its pictured scroll,
When we beyond the sunset roll.

IX.

True to the brain's bright orient dream,
Under the vast with sun and moon
Pace we on to the heart's old tune;
True to the brain's fresh orient dream:
Better to *be* than merely *seem;*
Heart-work is Heaven-work still, we deem.

X.

Truth is eternal, life decays;
Above the cloudy wrecks of time
Beacon the radiant souls sublime;
Art is eternal, life decays,
And purest ever the soul whose rays
Turn to the world of distant days.

XI.

Our spirits gleam from all around,
And deeper as the seasons roll
We pierce through Nature's sacred soul,
And grow a part of all around,
The hills, the forest foliage crown'd,
The streamlet's song, and tempest's sound.

XII.

God sways our years—the moon the brine,
The circling breadths of wood and sea
Seem flushed with present Deity:
God fills our life with light divine,
Our hearts with love, the grape with wine—
Our pulses beat and planets shine!

XIII.

Thus, comrade, speed our lives away,
As, toward the sinking golden glow
Of sunset o'er our graves we go,
Happily speed our lives away—
The angel Future cheers each day,
The spectre Past looks mild and grey.

XIV.

Still shall the old world yield us room
To breathe, apart from human strife,
In love and thought, our little life.

Yes! the old world will yield us room,
Till genial Nature showers the gloom
Of shadowing roses o'er our tomb.

The Forge.

I.

In the gloomy mountain's lap
Sleeps the village dark and quiet;
All have passed their labour-nap;
And the peasant, half awaking,
A blind yawning stretch is taking,
Ere he turns to rest again;
There is not a sound of riot,
Not a sound save that of pain,
Where some aged bones are aching;
Lo! the moon is in the wane—
Even the moon a drowse is taking.

II.

By the blossomed sycamore,
Filled with bees when day is o'er it,

Stands the Forge, with smoky door:
  Idle chimney, blackened shed—
  All its merry din is dead;
Broken shaft and wheel disused
  Strew the umbered ground before it,
And the streamlet's voice is fused
  Faintly with the cricket's *chirrup*,
As it tinkles clear and small
Round the glooming hearth and wall,
  Hung with rusty shoe and stirrup.

III.

Yes, the moon is in the wane:—
  Hark! a sound of horses tramping
Down the road with might and main;
  Through the slaty runnels crumbling,—
  Comes a carriage, swinging, rumbling,
Round the steep quick corner turning;
Plunge the horses, puff'd and champing;
  Like the eyes of weary ghosts,
The red lamps are dimly burning.
  Now 'tis stopt,—and one springs down,
  And cries unto the sleeping town—
"Ho! for a blacksmith—ho! awake!
Bring him that will his fortune make—
  The best, the best your village boasts!"

IV.

Up springs the brawny blacksmith now,
And rubs his eyes, and brushes off
The iron'd sweat upon his brow,
Hurries his clothes and apron on,
And wakes his wife, and calls his son,
And opes the door to the night air,
And gives a husky cough;
Then hastens to the horses, standing
With hung heads, and hotly steaming,
And sees a dark-eyed youth out-handing
A sweet maiden, light and beaming.

V.

He strikes a lusty shoulder-blow:
"Four shoes," he cries, "are quickly wanting:"
His face is in an eager glow,—
"Take my purse and all that's in its
Heart, if you in twenty minutes
Fit us for the road." The smith
Looks at the wearied horses panting,
Then at the clustering gold,
And thinks, as he falls to his work,
He dreams a mind-dream, rusty murk,
That this is but some faery myth—
A tale to-morrow to be told.

VI.

But now the forge fire spirts alive
To the old bellows, softly purring;
In the red dot the irons dive;
Brighter and broader it is glowing,
Stronger and stronger swells the blowing:
The bare-armed men stand round and mutter
Lowly while the cinders stirring,—
Ho! out it flames, 'mid sparkles dropping,
Splitting, glittering, flying, hopping;
Heavily now the hammers batter,
All is a glaring din and clatter!

VII.

In the cottage, dimly lighted
By the taper's drowsy glare,
Stands the gentle girl benighted;
By her side for ever hovers
That dark youth, oh, best of lovers!
Daring all that love will dare
With an aspect firm and gay:
Now the moon seems shining clearer—
Hark! a sound seems swooning nearer
From the heathy hills; the maid
Lists with ear acute; and while
One there, with brave, assuring smile,
Smooths her forehead's chesnut braid,
The danger softly dies away.

VIII.

Now the forge is in a glow,
Bellows roaring, irons ringing;
Three are made; and blow on blow
Sets the patient anvil singing;
"Another shoe—another, hark ye!"
Ra-ra, ra-ra, ra-ra-ra-rap
Split the ruddy sheddings sparky,
Ra-ra, ra-ra, ra-ra-rap!
Strikes the quick and lifted hammer
On the anvil, bright and worn;
While amid the midnight there
Beyond the ruddy streaming glare,
With a yellow, misty glamour,
Looks the moon upon the corn.

IX.

On the hill-road, moving nigher,
Hurries something dimly shooting,
Glances from two eyes of fire:
"Haste! oh, haste!" they're working steady;
Cries the blacksmith, "Now they're ready."
Pats the pawing horses, testing
On the ground their iron footing;
Helps the lady, lightly resting

On his black arm, up the carriage;
Takes the gold with doubt and wonder;
And as o'er the stones and gorses
Tramp the hot pursuing horses,
Cries with voice of jolly thunder,—
"Trust me, *they* won't stop the marriage."

X.

Scarce a minute's past away
When, oh, magic scene! the village
Lies asleep, all hushed and grey;
But, hark! who throng again the street
With roaring voices, brows of heat?
Come they here the town to pillage?
No. Across the road o'erthrown,
Carriage creaks, and horses moan;
"Blacksmith, ho!" the travellers cry;—
Not a taper cheers the eye;
While, a-top a distant hill
Flushed with dawn-light's silent warning,
Speed the lovers toward the morning
With a rapid, right good-will;
While, behind that father fretting,
The pale night-sick moon is setting.

The Troubadour's Pilgrimage.

I.

Eastward, moonlit peaks are glancing
O'er the dusk with silvery eyes;
Westward, tracts of Summer forest
Deepen down the crimson skies:
Pilgrims pass the bridge whose crescent
Darkens o'er the gleaming frith,
And the noon heat camps its vapour
O'er the bronzèd moorland's width—
Toll, bell of sunset, toll
Over listening land and river;
Sing, Memory, to my soul,
Of spirits lost, but loved for ever!

II.

Toward the norland distance yonder
Listening, praying, forth I go;
Starry stream and solemn mountain
Lure me, shining in their snow;

There, within a silent valley,
Full of the cold planets' light,
Lies the grave to which my fancy,
Dreaming, wanders through the night—
Toll, bell of sunset, toll
Over silent land and river;
Sing, Memory, to my soul,
Of spirits lost, but loved for ever.

III.

Onward, where awhile the Summer
Slumbers round in twilight blooms—
Waters showering from the summits,
Forest full of topaz glooms;
Moon and sea beneath me rising,
O'er me star and cottage nest—
Sadness in the eastern evening,
Music in the golden west—
Toll, bell of sunset, toll
Down the gorgeous glooming river;
Sing, Memory, to my soul,
Of spirits lost, but loved for ever.

IV.

Wheresoe'er the world I've wandered,
Realm of life, or place of tombs;
Through the Mediterranean splendours,
Through the dumb Egyptian glooms;

Radiant spirits round me hover,
Watch my rest, or with me stray,
While our hearts, in mournful anthems
Mingling, close the lonely day—
Toll, bell of evening, toll
O'er the starry trembling river;
Sing, Memory, to my soul,
Of spirits lost, but loved for ever.

V.

Oft I hear their charmed voices
Lingering round some mountain height;
Utterance rich as planet music
Swooning through the magic night.
Oft great brows of meteor beauty,
O'er the star-dim seas appear;
Oft in noonlit towns a silence
Falling, tells me they are near—
Toll, bell of darkness, toll
Fate like, down the ghostly river;
Sing, Memory, to my soul,
Of spirits lost, but loved for over.

VI.

Upward, where the moulder'd castle
Guards the quick, unquiet fords,
All its moated depths of waters,
Glossed with beams, like blades of swords:

Now the lowland's dark expansure
Widens from the mountain crest;
And a low star lights the valley,
Where my pilgrim heart would rest—
Toll, bell of silence, toll
Down the silver rippled river;
Sing, Memory, to my soul,
Of spirits lost, but loved for ever.

VII.

By this well, that bubbles sprayless,
Shall I rest upon my way:
Earth is broadening in shadow—
Heaven in brightness, while I pray.
"Blessed spirits, rise above me,
When the death-dark round me flows,
Like a crescent o'er the sunset,
Beaconing where the glory goes."
Toll, bell of Heaven, toll
Down the sapphire radiant river.
God, waft my trembling soul
Where rest the spirits loved for ever.

Under the Moon.

I.

Under the moon, as the twilight breeze
Ripples the water in pulses of light,
We stand on the bridge by the sycamore trees,
And list to the voices that come through the night.
Under the elm row, misty and dank,
Love's sweet laughter rings from the bank—
Sprinkled with many a dim red lamp,
Stretching away through the distance damp:
Hark! 'mid the foliage blossomed with June,
Tinkles a serenade under the moon.

II.

Under the moon in the village street,
Gossiping groups in the shadow meet;
Seated at dusky doorways there,
Red-lipped maidens taste of the air;
Whispering now of their lovers' eyes,
Blue as the beautiful summer skies;
Whispering now of their flatteries sweet,
As autumn's fruitage dropped i' the heat;
Until they cadence a trembling tune,
Soft as their pulses, under the moon.

III.

Under the moon by the cool sea-shore
The wind walks over its spacious floor,
Courting the snowy-bosomed sails
Daintily dipping through azure vales;
Over the crisp foam bearing along
The musing mariner's midnight song;
As by the rising helm, with hands
Lit in the compass lamp, he stands,
Thinking of those he left at noon,
Sad on the green shore under the moon.

IV.

Under the moon by the dusty road
Pace we on to the old Abode;
Over its sycamor'd roof and walls
The listless splendour floating falls,
Peering into the casement nook
Piled with many a brown old book:
Spirits are they whose pages teem
With thoughtful ditty and pictured dream,
Spirits, amid whose silence soon
Our own shall slumber under the moon.

Swift.

[The loves of Cadenus and Vanessa you may peruse in Cadenus's own poem on the subject, and in poor Vanessa's vehement expostulatory verses and letters to him. She adores him, implores him, admires him, thinks him something god-like, and only prays to be admitted to lie at his feet. As they are bringing him home from church, those divine feet of Dr. Swift's are found pretty often in Vanessa's parlour. He likes to be admired and adored. He finds Miss Vanhomrigh to be a woman of great taste, and spirit, and beauty, and wit, and a fortune too. He sees her every day; he does not tell Stella about the business: until the impetuous Vanessa becomes too fond of him, until the doctor is quite frightened by the young woman's ardour, and confounded by her warmth. He wanted to marry neither of them—that I believe was the truth: but if he had not married Stella, Vanessa would have had him in spite of himself. When he went back to Ireland, his Ariadne, not content to remain in her isle, pursued the fugitive dean. In vain he protested, he vowed, he soothed, and bullied; the news of the dean's marriage with Stella at last came to her, and it killed her—she died of that passion. In a note in his biography, Scott says that his friend, Dr. Tuke, of Dublin, has a lock of Stella's hair, enclosed in a paper by Swift, on which are written, in the dean's hand, the words—"*Only a woman's hair.*" An instance, says Scott, of the dean's desire to veil his feelings under the mask of cynical indifference. See the various notions of critics! Do those words indicate indifference or an attempt to hide feeling? Did you ever hear or read four words more pathetic? Only a woman's hair, only love, only fidelity, only purity, innocence, beauty; only the tenderest heart in

the world stricken and wounded, and passed away now out of reach of pangs of hope deferred, love insulted, and pitiless desertion; only that lock of hair left—and memory and remorse for the guilty, lonely wretch, shuddering over the grave of his victim.]—THACKERAY'S "HUMOURISTS."

I.

Two women loved him, shapes of Heaven,
Radiant as aught beneath the sky.
One gentle as the summer moon,
One ardent as the golden noon;
And to the first his heart was given,
And to the last his vanity.

II.

Equal in love, alike in doom—
Content to yield in proud desire
Their souls for shelter in that breast,
Palsied with passions long unrest,
Content to worship and expire
Silent within its upas gloom.

III.

Yes, gentle hearts, thy legend's old—
Old thy ambitioned instinct, too.
As turns the blossom to the light,
Beauty's attraction bends to might,
Though shrined within a brain as cold
As yon great snow star in the blue.

IV.

Long years they loved, unknown, apart;
In patient fond expectancy
Of consummated hope. At last
The shadow of each presence passed
Across the pathway to his heart,
And love grew dark with jealousy.

V.

Sweet Stella, anguished was the hour—
Ah, piteous hour of proud despair,
When trembled in thy little hand*

* "At length, however, Vanessa's impatience prevailed, and she ventured on the decisive step of writing to Mrs. Johnson herself, requesting to know the nature of that connexion. Stella, in reply, informed her of her marriage with the dean; and, full of the highest resentment against Swift for having given another female such a right in him as Miss Vanhomrigh's inquiries implied, she sent to him her rival's letter of interrogatories, and, without seeing him, or awaiting his reply, retired to the house of Mr. Ford, near Dublin. Every reader knows the consequence. Swift, in one of those paroxysms of fury to which he was liable, both from temper and disease, rode instantly to Marley Abbey. As he entered the apartment, the sternness of his countenance, which was peculiarly formed to express the fiercer passions, struck the unfortunate Vanessa with such terror, that she could scarce ask whether he would not sit down. He answered her by flinging a letter on the table, and, instantly leaving the house, remounted his horse, and returned to Dublin. When Vanessa opened the packet, she only found her own letter to Stella. It was her death-warrant. She sunk at once under the disappointment of the delayed, yet cherished hopes which had so long sickened her heart, and beneath the unrestrained wrath of him for whose sake she had indulged them."—Scott.

Thy restless rival's dread demand,
Upon that breast whose earliest flower
Sprung in thy smile, and blossomed there.

VI.

And poor Vanessa—sadder still
Thy weary worship at the shrine
Where bent thy brow, where turned thy gaze,
Dazzled to darkness in the blaze,
And mastered by a sovereign will,
Strong as the sun's sway o'er the brine.

VII.

Forsaken souls! you found at last
The barren wreath for which you vied.
Each, like the Greek girl, sought to draw
Love from a breathless statua,
Whose cold, eternal beauty cast
The shadow in whose gloom you died.

VIII.

For what to him were loves of earth,
That light the humblest soul below?
His planet flamed in wider skies,
And moved for mightier destinies
Than circle round a homely hearth,
Or centre in its narrow glow.

IX.

What! should the spirit which had soared
Ambition's eyrie as a King,
And wielded with a giant's power
The mighty movers of the hour,
Be cozened by some passion-bird,
And twitted with a feeble wing?

X.

A truce with mockeries—the weak
Are greatest tyrants when they dare.
Too long, too long had he foreborne
To check, in mere reserve of scorn,
This puppet play of changing cheek—
This fulsome puling of despair.

XI.

It was a dim October day,
When clouds hung low on roof and spire,
He dashed his horse, to gallop pressed,
Along the old road leading west,
Where Liffey's waters shimmering lay
Beneath the noonlight's struggling fire.

XII.

Aleft, the slopes of tillage spread;
And further, higher to the south,

The sloping slate-grey mountains rose,
Sun-pencill'd in the noon's repose,
And by his path the river bed,
Deep sanded with the summer drought.

XIII.

The city sunk in smoke behind,
Before, the air rose blue and lone.
At times, from ivied hedge and wall,
Faint shrilled the robin's crystal call;
And, from the west, the careless wind
Was blowing in a monotone.

XIV.

He marked not, as he swept along,
The golden woodland's glimmering domes;
He heard not, as he trampled by,
The foliage whispering to the sky,
The laugh of children, or the song
Of mothers in their rustic homes.

XV.

Unheeded all to eye and ear,
The world's old genial beauty past;
Nor reck'd he, in that hour of wrath,
Aught save the victim in his path:
Though pity, justice hovered near—
Though God was watching from the vast.

XVI.

At length, beneath its woody gloom,
Old Marley's cloister ends his way.
He lights—he knocks. The pigeon's plaint
Swoons fitfully above and faint;
And glimmers through the garden's bloom
The river's sheet of glassy grey.

XVII.

Lo! from her memoried laurel bower,*
Where oft she sat alone, to hear
His coming, she is hastening now,
To meet him with a joyous brow,
Though saddened by th' impending hour,
And shuddering with an unknown fear.

XVIII.

She enters—springs to meet him. God!
Can passion demonize a brow
Of spirit-splendour! In a breath
The letter's thrown; and he, like death,
Is gone. Hark! Ringing from the road
His horse's trampling echoes now.

* "He showed her favourite seat, still called 'Vanessa's Bower.' Three or four trees and some laurels indicate the spot. . . . There were two seats and a rude table within the bower, the opening of which commanded a view of the Liffey. . . . In this sequestered spot, according to the old gardener's account, the dean and Vanessa used often to sit, with books and writing materials on the table before them."—SCOTT.

XIX.

In terrored trance she burst the seal.
Ah, piteous aspect—shape forlorn!
Doom darkens o'er her, and she falls—
Dead as the shadow on the walls—
Dead, holding in her heart the steel—
Brain-blasted by his silent scorn.

XX.

Ah, well! a purer, tenderer light
Still smiles upon his barren years.
Like a sweet planet glimmering o'er
Some silent waste of vanished war,
Sweet Stella charms life's falling night
With eyes whose love outlives their tears.

XXI.

Yes, thou art true, though love has wreathed
Thy brow with cypress. Though the pall
Encircles life, thy voice, no less,
Is toned to soothe his loneliness,
Like melancholy music breathed
Through some funereal banquet hall.

XXII.

Star of Fidelity! Thy light
Soon set beneath the eternal wave,

And from thy place of cold repose,
Retributive remorse arose—
The fury of the deepening night,
And heaven darkened o'er thy grave.

XXIII.

As twilight's leaden shadows fall,
He sits within the casement lone.
Bright letters from bright comrades lie
Unheeded round him; and anigh
One empty chair beside the wall:—
The world has vanished—she is gone.

XXIV.

He muses—not in scorn or mirth,
And fondly clasps one raven tress;
Still flames the spirit vision through
Those deep-browed eyes of angry blue,
Too mighty for the mean of earth—
Too critic clear for happiness.

XXV.

Now hums the past its ceaseless song,
And through the chambers of his brain
The tender light of parted days,
Bright cordial smiles—old winning ways,
Remembered tones, unheeded long,
Rise from the silent years again.

XXVI.

Till, slowly deepens o'er his face
A mournful light, rare and divine,
Like Death's last smile; as silently,
And with a sad simplicity,
His aged hand essays to trace
That relic with one trembling line.

XXVII.

"Only a woman's hair!" No more.
The golden dreams of pride are gone;
And nought remains save this poor prize,
Instinct with anguished memories.
Life's tree is leafless now, and roar
The bleak winds through its skeleton.

XXVIII.

The dusk cathedral glooms the while—
The bell tolls in the upper air;
And silvering down the mouldered walls,
The winter moonlight coldly falls
Through one old window in the aisle,
On one memorial tablet there.

XXIX.

Ah, what were Fame's great trumpet breath,
The proud applause of mightiest men,

The storm the struggle, and the crown,
The world, that darkened in his frown—
The love that he had scorned to death,
Were dearer than an empire then.

XXX.

Oh, wisdom, manhood, where were ye?
Thus in caprice of power to move—
To play with hearts whose truth you tried—
To watch, poor puppet of your pride,
How long sweet, earnest constancy
Would live with unrequited love.

XXXI.

Vain requiem o'er a ruined life—
Vain sorrow for the vanished bloom
Of love's sweet blossom. Still with eyes
Turned to its God affection dies.
With curses cankering from the strife
Ambition epitaphs its tomb.

XXXII.

Alone, long, dreary years alone,
His days went down the darkened sky,
Racked with the heart's revenging war:
A Saturn on his icy star,
God-like, upon a ruined throne,
Friendless in his supremacy.

XXXIII.

Till, last, by that grey brow there came
Some angel pitying his distress;
And tamed the soul that burned within,
Sin-like revenging upon sin,
And quenched that hell of clearest flame,
In ashes of forgetfulness.

XXXIV.

His spirit lives within his page:
Dissective subtlety of glance,
Keen Truth, to make the merriest mourn,
Fierce wit, that brightens but to burn,
Are there; and cold, ironic rage,
Withering a world it views askance.

XXXV.

What, though amid our warrior band,
An alien patriot he be,
Whose combat clanged for Ireland's right,
In reason half, if half in spite,
Still shall we hang his mighty brand
In Freedom's sombre armoury.

XXXVI.

And when we pace along the shrine
That coldly closed on his despair,

View, from his angered life apart,
The passioned tremble of the heart
That ripples in the little line—
"Only a woman's hair."

Near the Grave-yard's Town of Death.

SONG.

I.

Near the grave-yard's town of Death,
In the evening light we stand,
Looking from the dust beneath
Forward to the spirit land;
Howsoe'er we court repose,
By the fire-side free from cares,
Soon or late from sun and snows
Death will make us wanderers.

II.

In the vast that spreads around
All is action, all is change;
To some mightier region bound,
Soul and planet forward range:

Twilight song and frugal feast
Soon shall pass like evening airs—
Soon from books that sweeten rest
Death will make us wanderers.

III.

Ah! must we leave thee, quiet earth,
So hallowed by departed ones—
Dawn dreams, old memories of the hearth,
E'en omens in the setting suns?
Yes, all we loved and all we knew,
All that sweetest fancy stirs,
Fade, when past yon ghostly blue
Death shall make us wanderers.

To a Spirit.

I.

The Sunset lies in amber wells
Amid the brown clouds of the West,
And falls a dew of peace and rest
Along the wave, and o'er the dells:
Thus in my Spirit's distant deeps,
When all is dark around, a few
Sweet founts of light my fancy keeps
Where Memory sits, and thinks of you.

II.

How oft upon the thought we fell,
In those sweet days that are no more,
Of wand'ring on some sunset shore,
When we in separate stars should dwell!
When, while her planet's purple night
Rose o'er the space of silent sea,
You watching earth, and I the light
Of thy new home, for sake of thee.

III.

A wind springs up toward yonder star,
It strikes and waves the summer wood,
And folds the light along the flood
Till but one billow burns afar:
Thus with the phantom blast sublime
All life and love to thee shall roll;
Thus on the last dim waves of time
Blend with thy long lost, blessed Soul.

Il Angelo.

I.

I sit at eve within the curtain's fold,
Where shone thy gentle face in the full moon
So many an eve, and sing some antique tune
We sung together oftentimes of old:
In that dear nook the lonely moon-beams fall,
And touch thy empty chair with mournful light:
Thy picture gazes on me from the wall;
I hear thy footsteps in old rooms at night.

II.

On lonely roads beneath the darksome dawn,
When broods upon the broad dead land the wind,
I wander sadly, looking oft' behind,
Maychance that I may see thy spectre wan;
For still I deem thou followest me, and still
Believe that love departs not with the clay:
Thy face looks on me from the morning hill,
Thy smile comes sadly from the close of day.

III.

Oft, oft, by sandy ridges o'er the sea,
Or over distant famished fields at night,
Where sheds some low pale star its slenderest light,
I seek in earth's dim solitudes for thee:
Proud of the everlasting love I bear,
Still mix with nature, drawing thence relief;
While, from the void of sunset's empty air,
The stars look on the glory of my grief.

Grape Song of Italy.

I.

Poet Brothers, let's be happy—give me wine, give me wine!
Life cannot be all dolour,
Else 'twill blanch its heavenly colour,—
Let us leave the dusty highway, and recline
Where our cheek of melancholy
Shall be flushed with ruby fully,
'Mid the jocund, mellow shadows of the vine—
Ha, ha!
'Mid the jocund, mellow shadows of the vine.

II.

The star that we inhabit—let it shine, let it shine!
If the sun may light its day,
We through dark can cheer its way,
By the lustre of these ruby lamps of wine.
Dream the night through cup in hand,
While our barque and minstrel band
Surge along amid those autumn clouds divine—
Ha, ha!
Surge along amid the autumn clouds divine!

III.

Fill my cup to overflowing with thy wine, with thy wine!
When last you pressed the grape
I could see the silver shape
Of the moon, through half this little chalice shine!—
So: let's drink unto the days,
Rising full of Heaven's rays,
When man shall grow free, joyous, bright, divine—
Ha, ha!
When man shall grow free, joyous, bright, divine!

IV.

When Love shall speed his mandates from the brine to the brine,
And peace shall plenty bring,
Till the lands with laughter ring,
Far beyond the Guadalquiver and the Rhine;
When Mind shall stamp the man
Who shall lead each nation's van,
And men shall know their Monarchs by that sign—
Ha, ha, ha!
And men shall know their Monarchs by that sign!

V.

When the myriads of the nations shall combine, shall combine,

Not to struggle with the lords,
Or to wage the war of words,
But to seek the means to raise them and refine;
Then shall Art enrich the earth,
Then shall glow the poorest hearth
With the beauty drawn from picture, song, and shrine—
Ha, ha, ha!
With the beauty drawn from picture, song, and shrine.

VI.

What! thou'rt weary; weary waiting for that time, the bright time;
Well, if earth must linger so,
Here—a dream-cup ere we go!
Never yet while fancy's left us let us pine;
Hope, work, and love—a light
Soon will cheer the lands of night,
As the dawn is glowing o'er our cups of wine—
Ha, ha, ha!
As the dawn is glowing o'er our cups of wine!

Spirit Company.

I.

Up cheerful as the morn I rise,
Though foreign airs around me blow,
For well I deem that Spirit eyes
Look into mine where'er I go:
So, in the viny window nook,
With southern sunlight round, I sit,
And read aloud, from some old book,
Old music lines of poet wit,
That those I love around may hear me,
And melt in sweet mute laughters near me.

II.

With them I stroll all day along
The fresh blue bay and sunny shore,
And hear the brown old fisher's song,
Above his nets hummed o'er and o'er;
And wander up the evening cliffs,
Askirted by the shadowy limes;
And as I watched the fading skiffs,
I whisper oft of loved old times,
That those I love around may hear me,
And smile with gentle memories near me.

III.

And when the golden sunset dips
Beneath the garden's walnut trees,
In vintage gay I bathe my lips,
Till the white star floats up the seas:
Then, as upon the hill o'erhead,
The quiet shepherd pens his fold,
I sit among the stilly Dead,
And sing the songs they loved of old,
And hear their echoes, grown divine,
Come back through this waked heart of mine.

IV.

But when o'er hill and ocean soon
Falls the deep midnight blue and rare,
And tolling bell and rounded moon
Awake the tranced time of prayer—
Through starry casement lone I gaze
Up on the heavenly path they've trod,
And murmur o'er their love and praise,
With lowly knees before our God:
And hear—as though beyond the sea,
The loved Old Voices pray for me.

A May-Day Rebel.

Once from the throne of Faery shrined,
'Mid wooded mountains o'er the Bay
Of sweet Rostrevor, issued forth
An edict through the azure North,
Granting a jocund holiday
To beast and bird and insect bright
Then breathing in the Summer light:
A gracious edict, well designed,
Written in laughter, kingly kind,
And published on the morning wind.

Say, Muse of mountain wilds and streams,
Of wandering airs and glancing beams,
Say, frolic Muse, the cause of this?
A simple cause: the King who bore
The ferny sceptre of Clough More
Was wedded just; his bride adored,
A lively sprite of Carlingford,
With soul so dignified and pure,
And lips so lovesome and demure,

That every Fairy round that shore
Had given his kingdom for a kiss.
She being asked to name the day,
Fluttered her primrose fan, and then,
In tones as timid as a wren,
Said, "Let it be the first of May."
Whereat the monarch bowed and broke
The crimsoned silence, while he spoke
As follows, 'mid his courtiers gay:
"With judgment hast thou chosen the hour,
Thou sweetest sprite of earth and air;
And here beneath those eyes I swear,
By every sun-drop in the shower—
By every mountain, spray, and flower,
That, as of old, the festal sun
That lights the day of good St. John
Shall view this space of shore and sea
Entranced in rich festivity:
Here, then, we yield by Sovereign law,
To all whom it concerns around,
By shore, or wood, or meadowy mound,
A joyous saturnalia."
He said: the scribe who waited near,
With thistle pen behind his ear,
Encharactered the royal brief
In haste upon a willow leaf;
The while that gracious king, intent

On largess and the public weal,
With smiling forehead, o'er it bent,
And sealed it with his crocus seal.

Scarce was the proclamation borne
Along the wandering winds of Mourne,
When, on a hill the sheep who cropped
In slopes of dewy pasture green
(A dull day business of routine),
Pricked up their white mild ears, and—stopped;
And toward the group a grave grey ram,
With cunning horns, and face of calm,
As such a patriarch king behoved,
Came paged by an attendant lamb:
"You hear, my friends—a holiday,"
That specious guide was heard to say:
"Come, let us from those pastures pass;
Here have we cropped whate'er we can
Of verdure, and to-day for man
We need not care one blade of grass;
Come round by cool Kilkeel till dark,
Let's go, and have a quiet lark;"
And heading straight his flock away,
They trotted gaily towards the bay.

Then 'mid the giant oaks sublime
Around a stately fronted hall,
With ivied eaves and chimnies tall,

Red brick embossed with mossy rime,
The feathered choristers awake
For some three hours of golden calm,
At once surceased their matin psalm.
Some sauntered to the distant brake,
Whose ruddy berries hung profuse
Their pendulous cups of summer juice;
Some winged them toward the waterfall
That through the granite flashed in foam,
And hopped, and dipp'd, and drank their share,
In joyousest abandon there;
While others, keeping nearer home,
Thronged round the grassy garden lake.
Oh, such a frolic revel ne'er
Was seen beneath the dome of air!
Down from his chimnied nest where he
Reflective passed the smoky noons,
The speckled magpie droop'd below,
Leaving his hoarded treasury
Of rags, and leaves, and gold doubloons,
Of straws, and bones, and silver spoons;
And with one black eye open wide,
And head a little bent aside,
Stood chaffing with a cautious crow.

But what was this to the Tom Tit?
Beneath a broad laburnum's shade,

Elate with morning air he hung
Vivacious, chatted, prank'd, and sung;
And though the Magpie in the sun
Looked in sarcastic silence on,
He cared not! but around him made
Each wren and robin of the glade
Shake in their feathers at his wit.
In fact, he held th' assembly's ear;
While round him, merrily and fast,
Sweet song and conversation passed,
'Mid new removes of seed and berry;
No lack appeared of jovial cheer,
Or harmony, save once, when there—
A transient difference arose,
But ended ere it came to blows—
Between two sparrows, for a cherry.

Soon from his shadowy bed of straw,
Where he had stretched the live-long night,
With keen nose laid along his paw,
The watch-dog stroll'd into the light,
And shook himself: all through the noon
Of darkness had he rested there,
Quite undisturbed by noise or care;
Though, now and then, for duty's sake,
He growled, to mark th' obtrusive moon
Her proper distance o'er the lake,

Or barked—to keep the house awake.
There, near a pool whose placid space
Was dimpled by the insect throng,
Big fussy flies with buzzing song,
Grey gnats adroit, with tickling stings,
And harmless water-sprites with wings
Of splend'rous emerald and blue,
A flashing, light, finessing crew,
That honest guardian took his place—
He snapp'd—he miss'd—again he snapp'd—
He miss'd—for so the fortune happ'd;
And as around him buzz'd and spun
The myriad mischiefs in the sun,
With each mischance he tried to smile,
And nodding toward them said the while—
That, after all—"'twas only fun!"
At which the Tit, with one neat *mot*,
Convulsed the company: and, lo!
The grey Ass in the paddock stood,
And gazed upon this passing sport
With discontented eye amort,
And gravely pondering, patient head.
Then taking some half-hour to think,
To knit each slow inductive link,
Observe, deduce, revolve, conclude,
With ears maturely raised, he said—
"Well, really—this is very good."

Thus sped the day o'er sky and earth,
Grown instinct with fantastic mirth;
While elfest shapes beneath the trees
Roved in ecstatic companies—
And blackbird's song and insect's joke
  On leafy branch or pleached flower,
In melody and sparkle broke,
  To charm the sun's declining hour.

There, in the pleasant summer cavern
Of his honeysuckle tavern,
Sidelong stretched a tipsy bee,
Buzzing forth, inconstantly,
  Incoherent hummings, funny.
Near, a comrade waxing spruce,
  As he pruned him in the sun,
  Droned a wise reproof to one
Less overcome with luscious juice;
  Ere to his bachelor abode
  (An oak tree on the townward road,
Hardby an effervescing spring)
He wandered on unsteady wing,
  Chanting a bacchant song of honey.
Yet, like the rest, he reached his home
Before the drowse of twilight gloom,
  Brimful of sunny recreation;
Nor felt the least necessity

To use his sting that happy day,
Save when a bat who whirred along
The course of each returning throng,
Was heard maliciously to say—
"Bless my good eyes—what dissipation!"

Now falls the hour of evening rest,
The fresh wind puffs the fisher's sails;
The bee is hived, the bird's a-nest,
The udder's spirt in foaming pails,
And twilight deepens past the bay,
'Till o'er the inland town afar,
'Mid flakes of cloud still rosed with day,
Sparks out some golden-cinctured star—
And strikes the river narrowing down,
With ruffled current as it flows,
By one old turret, lone and brown,
Sea-lapped and sentinelled by crows.
Now, 'mid the slopes of furrowed earth,
The peasant drives his wearied yoke;
Now from the crackling cottage hearth
Mounts tranquilly the azure smoke;
Now, past the winding road anigh,
The drover guides his dusty sheep;
The lazy waggoner plods by,
Behind his slow horse, half asleep:
Now groups of rustic lad and lass

Beside the shadowy ferry throng;
Now through the bright mid-stream they pass,
With oars that time some homely song;
And beached at length above the sea,
Push homeward up each shadowy height,
While glimmers red and distantly
Their cottage window's welcome light;
The farms are hushed; beside their way
The dripping wheels of mountain mills
Stream in the leafy trickling ray;
The bon-fires blaze along the hills;
They hear the distant voices ring
In festal echoes of acclaim;
They see the wild forms hurrying
In twilight dances round the flame;
Till one by one each joyous sound
Dies off upon the lonely air;
The red fires drowse along the ground,
The dances cease, the hills are bare;
And as the sea-wind stirs the heath,
And silvery spring-tide floods the shores,
Nought save the moon on grey Omeath
Moves by the quiet cottage doors.

Fanny's Soul.

I.

Sweet Fanny's soul is like her eye,
A little heaven smooth and bright;
Where everything that passes by
Imprints a picture in its light:
From morning until evening's sun
Through moods so multiplied it rolls,
You'd think sweet Fanny had not one
But even—aye, a hundred souls.

II.

That pious little orb at dawn
Is filled with purest seraph fire;
At noon it floats in music drawn
From poet page, and cedar lyre.
At twilight time the fays alone
Can whisper where that soul will flit;
And as for me, I'd give my own
For one sweet hour to follow it.

III.

Yes, that clear spirit can win its light
From tears, from smiles, it sighs, it sings;
And even on some frolic night
Will take the grape leaves for its wings;
And show such wit, such rosy airs
After one tiny cup of wine,
You'd think you saw the merry stars
Peep downward through some little vine.

IV.

What she may grow I seem to know,
Each day I see her, less and less:
Perhaps the star that shines below
Might offer me a sparkling guess;
But as I cannot catch the wise
Bright thoughts that from the planets fall,
I'll read awhile in Fanny's eyes,
And when I've learned them tell you all.

Old Days.

I.

Oh! for the sweet old Days when earth
Still bore the freshness of its birth!
When stream and star and forest tree
Were full of present Deity;
A primal, happy, simple time,
Which rest on Heaven made sublime:
  While yet unstirred by wars and cares,
  The green world rolled through morning airs,
  'Mid happy songs and peaceful prayers.

II.

Then through the dawn-lit forest ways
The buskined hunter trod the maze:
Then rosy girl and shepherd swain
Sung on the dim sheep-drifted plain;
And not a wind swept o'er the grass,
But some sweet spirit seemed to pass:
  Gods scanned the world with lightning look—
  Nymphs from the falling waters spoke—
  And heaven with Eve's first star awoke.

III.

Oh for the golden Days when earth
Glowed from her love bright second birth,
When the great Heart of God revealed
His glory in the Asian field;
And o'er that grave of myriad woes,
Faith, love, and light at length arose;
And the true star of Liberty
Refulgent streamed o'er earth and sea
From the poor hills of Gallilee.

IV.

There, by some well, at close of day,
The Pilgrim paused to rest and pray;
Or down some holy aisle at night—
Paced in the altar's solemn light—
Visions of angels round him shone;
The stern Apostles frowned in stone;
But, past the glory and the gloom,
One brow of passion, love, and doom
Still beckoned toward the Saviour's tomb.

V.

Now earth is deaf with roaring wheels;
Man thinks the more the less he feels;
Now Life amid pale reason's gleams
Makes idols of her icy dreams.

Now Faith has framed its god of gold,
Each new religion mocks the old.
And, like a cloud of evening grey
Upon the sinking rim of day,
The holy Ages lapse away.

The Death of Hercules.

Dark on the ocean lies the Lemnian Isle
Beneath the silent pallor of the dawn;
A wooded tract, with mountains in the midst,
Fir-plumed, and shielded round with steeps of grey,
Whence foam the rain-fed rivers that in one
Water the inland. To the South, the Town
Sleeps on the gloomy promontory's arm,
Piled high with tower and temple o'er the main,
Wide spacing to its furl of moonlit cloud—
A floor of azure, dark with drifts of wind.

Here, from a rocky gorge, through which a stream
Dashed its disquiet current, from whose sides,
High up, the cedars lightened in the morn,
There rose a cry of one in agony,
Fitful, as comes the evening gust along

The sandy ridges of the winter sea.
Beneath a cliff, all torment-torn, he lay,
Convulsed and shadowy, as some ocean shore
That, beat by winds of darkness through the night,
Moans in a stormy trance. But sudden came
A pang; and, as one burst from out a dream,
Clutched by a spasm of supernatural pain,
Up-staggering swung upon his weary feet
The dying Hercules. 'Twas here, remote
From human comforting, could such like soothe
The tortures destined him by gods, he sought
Death in the solitude; though racked with pain
Unshaken, for to him alike was given
The powers and endurance of a god;
And, heavy with a growing lassitude,
He tottered onward o'er the craggy path,
Till where the low hills sloped into the plain,
Plunging from out the gloom, he met the morn.
The level golden glances struck his brow,
Damp with night dews, and black with agony,
And darkened there, so mighty are the throes
That strength sustains when turned to suffering.
Some spaces on, abrupt from the smooth mead,
A peaked mountain stood against the sky;
Toward it he strode; and scarce the distance now
Was midway gained, when from the dewy dark

A wandering shape emerging onward bore,
And staring through the light he knew his friend,
Philoctetes, and struck his heart for joy,
For he had yearned for aid of such an one
To pile a pyre of rich and odorous woods
On yonder peak, and help him to ascend
The fiery mound, and tell how he should die.
So joy was in his soul, though racked with pain,
As up the hill their steps elastic clomb.

Still, in the West the leaden night hung low,
Departing. All the orient streamed with fire,
Broadening the shadows, and, o'er bank and mead,
Kindling the turf in flames or rainy green.
They scaled the hill along the torrent's side,
While through the tangled thickets came the low
Of the wild cattle, startled as they browsed;
A raven on the sombre pine tree top
Swung croaking in the draughts of upper air;
And poised the grey-winged eagle in the void
Above the glittering ridges of the sea.
Then piled they high a pyre of odorous trunks,
Torn from the ragged earth; cedar and pine,
Aloe and arbutus, and sandal wood
That filled the air with faint dream-like perfumes,
When sunset gloated round them; nought remained
Save fire to breathe a soul in this rich frame;

Nor was it wanting long, for the sad night,
Just dropped beneath the steeps, had risen in storm,
Puffing the cloud tracts up the level South.
In a cleft near, a mighty mouldering oak,
Struck by the lightnings of some low-browed cloud,
A branchless bole still smouldered, and thence rose
Its columned smoke soaring the stilly air
Like a departing phantom. This they seized,
And bore it crackling up the heathy gorge
And thrust it in the pyre. The Hero then,
Weak unto death, but strong in glory within,
To Philoctetes spake a little space:
"I who was born with the god-gift of Strength,
Methinks have used it rightly; to the weak
A safeguard, to the base and evil, death;
Not without suffering; but the wounds are healed,
The tortures numbed in all whose burning souls,
Though crowned with many various victories,
Sink not on glory achieved, but thirsting still
Toil up to higher fountains, resting not
While aught of wrong remains upon the earth.
Pain is the teacher of the hero-souled,
And he who treads the earth with largest powers
Is doomed to deepest trial, ruth, and woe.
Lo! on this rude, scarce knitted earth I've wrought
Through many a summer bright and winter grey,
Earnest in labour; fostering the strength

The mighty gods have yielded me for good.
Few joys were mine, for pleasures such as men
Yearn to repose upon, for unto me
Seemed pleasure ever as a seedless flower
That blooms awhile, and dies in its delight,
Barren of increase and of permanence.
My joys were in the victories I won,
In labours never resting: from the time
This arm could swing a weapon, I have been
A vanquisher; and there is not a land,
From the east star unto the clouds of even',
But there I've crushed some evil. Thou, broad Sun!
Hast seen me in the far Hesperean Isles
Sweat through the day in that huge writhing fight
With the clawed dragon, snorting poisonous fire;
But, ere thy setting, on the drenched plain,
Amid thy light, his burning life-blood smoked.
What giants have I slain in the grey wastes
Of caverned Garsa, where my battle held
Not solely with those mighty bulks of men
Weaponed with rocks they tore from the rude realm,
Lessening the hills, but with their parent gods,
Whose jealous thunder frequent numbed my arm.
Nor on the earth alone my tasks were laid;
Far from the human race, from sun and moon
Descending, with adventurous heart I've pierced
The shadowy cope of Death beneath the ground,

Crossed the long-lapsing, dim, oblivious stream,
Where flit the Phantoms with vague open eyes,
Silent as sleep, and deeper through the gloom—
Have seen the upward glare of Phlegethon,
Red on the rim of night, and borne aloft
Victorious, the monster of the gates
Amazed, and blinded looking on the sun.
Ah! I grow faint; the ashes choke the flame;
Weak am I, as when in the early days
In dalliance enervate awhile I dwelt
'Mid pillared towns, and touched with gentle kiss
The oval brow of star-eyed Omphale,
Whose face was like the evening—my heart wanders—
And, lo! the sun is parted from the sea.
Ah, well do I remember such a morn
As this it was, when, in a gloomy land,
After the writhing struggle of the night
I burst Antæus' breast, and sick with toil
Adown the crags I moved unto the shore
To bathe me. The great thunder muttered then
Above my head rejoicingly; but ere
I trod the beach, in shadow strode I on
Beneath the eagle clouds that, scenting death,
Clattering their beaks in hunger, o'er me swung,
Circling—for I bore on his bloody shield,
Red as the northern moon. Ah! fainter still—
I fight against myself. Here let it close.

What! though Death be man's heritage, and pain
The handmaid of his years—why rage at fate
In impotence, and pule our strength in grief?
Where sorrow is the destiny of man,
Endurance be in the glory of the soul.
Not in this world alone are toil and care
Companions—the great Heaven is full of tears;
Nor more in night's eternal-looking stars
Than here, security against decay:
There stands the bridal couch beside the bier;
There rolls the Spirit whose great light is life,
Whose shadow Death; trial and suffering,
Conditions of all being, till the soul
Is purified from matter, or by toil,
By earnest-toil, deep purposed, long-endured
Spirit makes dust its slave.

Of this no more;
My task is done; death whispers in the wind.
Enough for me that I have lived, enough
That I have conquered, nor do I recall
My varied toil with pride and vauntings vain;
Whoso is strong holds strength but as a dower
From the great uncreate gods; and using it
To fittest purpose paces hand in hand
A fellow-labourer with them, and shapes
A life that moves in concert with the Heavens.

Good Philoctetes, take this bow, a gift
Poor in itself, a weapon well nigh worn,
But sanctified in what it hath achieved,
And with it take my memoried heritage,
And when, old friend, above thy winter hearth
Thou seest this relic hang, remember him
Who gave it thee, nor ever bent its strength,
Save when some shape of evil cursed the world.

The flame begins to roar—'tis time to mount
This altar of self-sacrifice. Farewell!
Farewell! Mourn not for me. I go to rest
Awhile from labour, ere, with fresh-given strength,
I track the ravaged wilds of the great stars.
Once more to thee and earth I bid adieu,
And, armoured still in death, lie down in fire,
Firm-willed, and burn this eager spirit free!"

Despondency.

I.

It is the eve of a rainy day;
Toward the coming night,
The garden stretches east away,
And every shrub on wall and ground
Droops in the damp grey light,
With scarce a sound,
Save the unfrequent drop
That seems to pause, and stop,
Many times, before it meets the ground.

II.

Thus the heart, heavy with grief,
Looks unto gloomy death;
And slowly finds a dumb relief
From memories of which it dies,
In shaping its last breath
In silent sighs—
In tears nigh wept away,
That fall from eyes
Long dimm'd, long wearied of the day.

The Two Visitors.

I.

Two figures beat some village door,
And all the neighbours feel a shock:
The Taxman hammers o'er and o'er,
The Gravedigger gives a single knock.

II.

When comes the first, in noisy haste,
With empty purse I stuff my ear;
And when the second, solemn paced,
Plods towards my cot—I shall not hear.

The Old Friend.

A WINTER SONG.

I.

The moon watches coldly, the frost, colder still,
Stars the pane. Yes, the hard silent winter has come:
The air glitters bleak o'er the white barren hill,
Far off the war rages, and want wastes at home;

To fill my poor pitcher the ice must be broke—
Weak wine for such midnights as these, I allow—
No matter: come forth from your trunk, my old Cloak,
You have slept all the Summer, awake to me now;
Enfold me to-night—life has yielded but few
So ready when wanted as you, Friend, as you.

II.

Enclosed in your arms, all the time that has fled
Since we first walked together one wild Autumn day;
The twelve varied seasons arise from the dead,
And approach, as I gaze down the dim wintry way;
The sweet studious morns when affection and home
Surrounded my heart; the fantastical years
When the blood ruled the brain—and the death cloud of doom
Still scattering the distance with shadow and tears,
All return from youth's sphere in the far ghostly blue,
All have faded to phantoms, save you, only you.

III.

Now, I think in your warmth of the All Hallows night
When a dear one made dearer our friend's glowing hearth;
Where we watched with quick pulses the faery nut's light
And, sadden'd with love, vaguely joined in the mirth.

Returning, I whispered her many a vow,
While the keen windy stars trembled o'er the brown wold—
She was cosily folded in fur, but, somehow,
Without you and my arm little Mary was cold.
Ah! her tears touched this spot as she sighed she'd be true—
But she was not so faithful as you, Friend, as you.

IV.

Oft, oft have we flown o'er the shelterless seas,
While the surge rolled us on with a storm-slanted mast;
Oft through far foreign towns, full of fountains and trees,
By the grey carved Cathedrals we've pondered and pass'd.
Old Confidant, now might we tell all we know
Of our strange German revels with Students of Art:
When our group, brimm'd with beer through the streets' starry glow,
Chaunted Fatherland Songs from the depths of the heart.
Even now, the vast smoke that we cloudily blew,
While great arguments raged, seems embalmed, Friend, in you.

V.

As I muse o'er your life, one sad phase I recall,
But alas! even Kings to necessity bend!
'Twas a summer that shook from a dynasty's fall,
That you became poverty's hostage, old friend.
Many bright days you pined, but when clouds white with cold
Rose over the city, I marched to the den
Where you lay; and you well may remember I sold
Three precious old volumes, to ransom you then.
Three comrades were lost—though I still, it is true,
Saved Shakspeare to read, when enfolded by you.

VI.

Ah, dear old companion, no more must we part;
For should poverty pinch, even Shakspeare must go!
As we haunt the old scenes you shall cover my heart,
Until Death, in his cloud, takes my spirit below.
Some friend I can trust for those moments will place
In my coffin one picture whose smile I adore;
While you, constant still, shall envelope my face,
As together we sink from the world evermore.
Better thus than to leave a companion so true
To the stranger, when old and declining as you.

The Exile's Lament.

I.

Oh, my heart is with old times!
My friends have passed like marriage chimes;
And joy now breathes but from the rhimes
Of minstrels that I loved when young;
And in old songs that of a night
By hearth or summer-evening light
My dear companions sung.
The few that last from the pale past
Are silent, cold, and grey.
Youth has fled—all are forsaking
The dance the merry-making;
'Mid falling tears the world they tread,
With age and weakness wearied
And souls that turn but to the Dead,
Ah, welladay!

II.

Yon moon has never changed
Since o'er the far off fields I ranged,
Ere time grew dark or hearts estranged
In life's disastrous fight.

By windows then at eventide,
My love and I sat side by side
Amid the windy light.
The moon clouds past, and she at last
Is vanished far away.
Now my heart with memory passes
By her dear grave chanting masses;
Reading her loved books, and talking
With her as alone I'm walking—
Ah, welladay!

III.

'Tis a night of New Year's Day,
The clanging chimes have ceased to play,
And the stars look pale and grey
O'er the strange town where I dwell:
There are laughters in the street
Where the light young neighbours meet,
And the aged their stories tell.
But, there's One with me alone,
Who from heaven came this day,
(God grant my love speaks truly,
In the fancy wakened newly;)
Who from heaven came this day,
To search the earth for me,
By the grave that's o'er the sea,
By the old house on the lea—
Ah, welladay!

Death in Dreams.

I.

A Boy once soared on Fancy's wing,
And gave to many a couplet birth;
But though he taught his birds to sing
Of loftiest themes, they died on earth.

II.

For too remotely streamed their chime
Above the cope of noisy day;
Nor had the dusted ear of Time
One nook for echoes such as they.

III.

Each planet splendour of the sky
Came to his call, but came to prove,
Alas! how little Mercury
Could yield of wit, or Venus love.

IV.

And though his soul essayed to trace
In starry song their tracts divine,
Those grand monopolists of space
Were niggards of their corn and wine.

V.

Soon, soon he found such mighty themes,
Whose proper home is in the sky,
Must waft him from uncertain dreams
To certain immortality.

VI.

Then next in lower realms he hung,
And warbled near the human hive—
Gave language to the heart, and sung
Of life below, that he might live.

VII.

The Age's tone, the Fashion's form,
He sounds and pencils with his hand;
He lights the passing passion's storm,
He tunes the feeling of the land.

VIII.

And while across the mirror pass
The homely shapes the people knew,
The people gaze upon his glass,
And gazing, find each image true.

IX.

Ah! still in vain; howe'er he sung
Of household happiness and joy,
His hearth grew cold, and winter flung
Her icy mantle o'er the boy.

X.

Though from his brain's bright altar soared
His Fancy's incense streaming wide,
So little wine of earth was poured
Upon the flame that soon it died.

XI.

Soon echo flapped his sounding name,
And Time in marriage claimed his verse;
But while the temple chimed his fame,
The cloister toll'd above his hearse.

XII.

Too late low-browed Reality
Proclaimed the old truth by his bust—
That mortal's most desired supply
Comes less from heaven than from dust.

XIII.

Now by his grave-stone bleak and hard
This lonely epitaph is read—
"Here lie the ashes of a bard,
His verses live, but he is dead."

The Prophecy.

I.

As, past the land of Pyramids,
Went down the yellow day,
Within his shadowy evening tent
The dying Patriarch lay;
A mighty man, with beard that strewed
His breast in waves of grey.

II.

Around his couch his dusky sons
Were praying on the knee,
And sigh and moan rose o'er and o'er,
But silent all was he;
As an eagle stands amid its brood,
And stares across the sea.

III.

"The time is closing round my life,
I tread a darkening road;
My centuried soul, a wintry light,

Fades from its weak abode;
But God lives yet a mighty spring
Amid my branching blood.

IV.

"I thank thee, God, that thou hast poured
My years with bounteous hand,
And multiplied my life in those
That round me weeping stand,
Strong sons and good, that yet shall spread
Thy nations through the land.

V.

"Come nearer still, my sons, while I
Can see thy faces round.
I leave ye like the five great stars
In one blue cluster wound,
That when the desert moon has set
Will shine above the ground.

VI.

"I go—but whither? God alone,
Who treads the darkness, knows;
And ye shall too be lost like me
Amid the cloud's repose,
Like yonder range of hills that fade
In night beneath their snows.

VII.

"Come, Ramoth, first-born of my days,
Here bend thee this last hour—
The arrows rattle on thy back,
I feel thy thews of power—
Thy life shall pass, a stormy sun,
A sweeping thunder shower.

VIII.

"Thy steps are on the mountains,
Where mighty caverns yawn,
Thy sport amid the lions,
With spear and arrow drawn,
Those arms shall strew their yellow bulks
Along the sandy dawn.

IX.

"Amid the harvest breadths of wheat
Brown Reuben, be thy toil;
In realms of plenty shalt thou dwell,
And gather from the soil
The waving grain, the drooping fruit,
The store of wine and oil.

X.

"Lo! where the rain of summer falls
Beneath the northern light,
'Mid tracts of pasture and of springs,

And sheep flocks calm and white,
A shepherd, Lameth, thou shalt watch
The planets through the night.

XI.

"Who's here?—alas! my vision wanes,
My glance is fixed afar:
Neriah, well I know thy shape
Straight as a band of war,
And daring brow and glittering eye,
Keen as a stormy star.

XII.

"Thy life shall waste on ocean
Where wind and water roars;
In merchant galleys thou shalt cleave
The deep of distant shores,
And up their rivers speed amid
The foam of many oars.

XIII.

"Yes, far away from Egypt,
Its pyramids and stream,
Thy kindred's tents and sails shall rise
Deep in the Western gleam,
Till on thy brethren's ears thy name
Shall murmur like a dream.

XIV.

"Stand from my side while comes the light
Through yon familiar door.
The air seems filling with great words
That roll from heaven's shore;
All things grow clear, and fills my soul
With new immortal lore.

XV.

"And now mine eyes are dark to all,
All lost the path I trod,
But new life teems upon my soul
As from our Moses' rod—
I close mine eyes in awe beneath
The shadow of my God."

Female Finery.

LUCY'S ATTIRE.

As maidens pluck from changing fields
The varying blooms to deck their hair,
So like the hue the season yields
Should be the garb of woman's wear:
Now in raiment rich and precious,
Now in simple dress delicious;
Boddice ripe as rubious cherry,
Kerchief black as ivy berry;
Sad and sere, or bright and merry;
Imaging in fancies dear
All the glories of the year.

First, when comes the dewy Spring
Through the frosted morning air,
And the bird relumes its wing
With callow white, and azures rare;
Lucy's robes shall be of blue,
Tender as the April skies,
Dappled o'er with traceries
Quaint and simple, like some bed
Of mossy violets sprink'd with red
Of daisies peeping through the dew.

Then her lithe and slender waist
With ribband girdle shall be graced :
Round her heart, with pressure slight
Coily creeping, 'till it join
Sideway in a cluster fine ;
Fine and fond, as though it ran
Panting till it closed its span—
Then drooping faint with pure delight.
Cosy knots of crimson, too,
Shall deck her bosom soft and true,
While cunning fringes, white and neat,
Waver prim from waist to feet ;
Like the tricksy traits, I guess,
Of sweet feminine finesse :—
Such a robe as this must wing
Lucy like a shape of Spring.

When the Summer's sultry noon
Flecks her chamber with its rays ;
Or in arbours sweet, the moon,
Warmly waning through the haze,
Sheds along her careless hair
Languid lustres, she shall wear
Floating robes of purest white,
And perfied scarf as airy light
As morning cloud : but when the crown
Of golden Autumn turns to brown,

And sad the wind of sunset blows
About the evening's shortened close;
When bees have settled in their hive,
And leaf-strewn gates are closed at five,
When moonlight fays in pantries flock
O'er milky pail, and honey crock,
Oh, then, in garb of russet, she
Shall pace the rounds of housewifery;
With key bunch safe in apron fold,
Mix with the twilight ouphs, and feast
In morning casements, looking east,
The bright eyed robin puff'd with cold.

When December's leaden day
Scarcely breaks the clasp of night,
Soft shall be her garb, and gay,
Soft and warm in winter's spite:
Netted wreaths of closest coil
Shall guard her locks in silken toil;
Bonnets blithe of darling dies
Enshade her forehead's coquetries;
Collars, crescent-shaped and white,
Needled from the flaxen skein,
Round her gentle throat will show
Like a wreath of crispy snow;—
Even her finger tips shall glow
In tiny gloves that fit as tight
As pink sheaths of the perfumed bean.

But when norland tempests stir,
Blowing o'er the frosted lands,
She must wear, without demur,
Cosy refuges of fur
For sweetest neck, and cold white hands;
So that whosoe'er she meet
Shall deem her soft salute a treat:
And though skies be grey and dull
Round about her, yet within,
Mantle lined with warmest wool,
Shall her heart make merry din;
As she treads the noonday town
Toward the costly decked bazaar;
Or by evening forest brown
Wanders with her favourite star.

Such shall seem her outward dress;
As the mystic seasons roll
Seasoned with them; while no less
Shall their image tinge her soul,
Chaste as chill December; bright
As starry July's summer night;
Pure as April's gellid buds,
Rich as August's fruited woods;
Blending in its many moods
Nature's warmth with Heaven's light.

Artist's Song.

VIVE LA BOHEME.

I.

Ours is an Arab life, they say,
Sweet Fancy-friends, 'tis truth they tell,
Yet, somehow, can we find each day
A peaceful palm, and quiet well;
Our wants are few where beauties shine,
And beauties shine o'er earth and sea;
Let fate give others gold and wine,
But leave us Art and Liberty!
We speed each sorrow
Toward the morrow
Where the golden clouds have birth,
While, like the swallow,
Still we follow
Summer and freedom round the earth.

II.

'Tis true, we smile at custom's form,
Art looks for truth in everything,
And birds that sing through sun and storm
Would lose, if caged, both voice and wing:

The bird that lives uncaged, unsought
(Our neighbour in the ivy tree),
And sings his song each morn, is not
More careless of the world than we;
We may grow rich,
And win our niche,
And change our views, and change our mirth—
Till then we follow,
Like the swallow,
Fancy and freedom round the earth.

III.

Our mansions, they are baseless yet,
The sunny fields our only pew,
A faithful dog our household pet,
Our "public" but a friend or two;
Yet poverty has many modes
Of doubling such sweet charms as come:
We've rambles o'er the pleasant roads,
We've moonlight songs returning home—
When we grow great
In carriage state
We yet may roll in gouty worth;
Till then we follow,
Like the swallow,
Summer and sunshine round the earth.

IV.

Within the little chamber there
How many an hour we've won from fate!
Oh, glorious refuge ten feet square
From all the mockeries of the great!
There rise our pictures like the dream
That soothes the poor man all the night;
Our systems, wonderful as steam,
Our strains, unknown as exquisite,
Some day divine
Abroad they'll shine—
'Till then we live in fortune's dearth,
And like the swallow,
Follow, follow
Summer and fortune round the earth.

V.

There oft our chorused voices roll—
'Tis beer alone inspires our folk;
There theories of Star and Soul
Grow clear amid tobacco smoke.
No watch have we, but o'er the town
Time tolls the hour in crimson light;
No princely company we own,
'Tis Shakspeare only cheers the night;
Our wit abounds,
Each voice resounds,

We yet may win a calmer hearth—
Till then we follow,
Like the swallow,
Beauty and sunshine round the earth.

VI.

Yet have we something dearer, friends,
Than hearts that pulsate fearlessly;
Something diviner heaven sends,
Like stars that light a lonely sea.
Oh, we have hope for all who've flown!
Oh, we have angels in the air,
Beloved souls that, all unknown,
Still follow us from year to year—
In mute despairs,
In silent prayers,
We think o'er all who've blessed our hearth,
And deem they follow,
Like the poor swallow,
All that they love around the earth.

VII.

Then let us dwell in such delight
As heart and soul can give alone,
And with wild fancy's charms to-night
Revel, while time is yet our own;

While yon rich autumn cloud unrolls,
And fills with gold our casement nigh;
While the great stars, like poet souls,
Look in on Art and Liberty!
Where nature beams
We'll weave our dreams,
Where folly struts we'll have our mirth,
And, like the swallow,
Follow, still follow,
Freedom and Light around the earth.

Song of All Hallow's Eve.

I.

The year is growing aged and dull;
Late rise the days, and weary soon;
With morning fog the fields are full,
And fall the leaves with evening's moon.
Shut to the doors, and gather nigh'r,
Our summer time is scarcely past;
Beside the fire, with cup and lyre,
We'll soon outsing the winter's blast.
Hour upon hour,
Over our bower,
Shining and swift, departs, departs;
Time to-night
Will quicken his flight,
To follow awhile our bounding hearts.

II.

Lo! Autumn passed, with face of care,
This eve along the dusky road,
Nut clusters tinkled in his hair,
And rosy apples formed his load.

All friendless, by the withered thorn
The kind brown spirit lingered long.
Log heap the fire, sing higher, higher,
And cheer his ghost with light and song.
Hour upon hour,
Over our bower,
Mellow and mild departs, departs.
Time to-night
Must quicken his flight
To follow awhile our bounding hearts.

III.

Send round the wine of summer earth,
And speed the winter's twilight game;
Bend, maidens, round the glowing hearth,
And guess at lovers by its flame;
Soon Love shall ring from yonder spire
The joy each faery nut foretells;
Love strike the lyre, love guard the fire,
And tune our lives like marriage bells.
Hour on hour,
Over our bower,
Shining and swift departs, departs.
Time to-night
Has quickened his flight
To follow awhile our bounding hearts.

IV.

Smile, silvered Age, upon the band
Of joyous children grouped below—
Bright travellers from the morning land
Where we have wandered years ago.
The dawning heart to heaven is nigher
Than wisdom's snowiest brow can soar.
Sing to the lyre, circle the fire,
And mingle with your youth once more!
Hour upon hour,
Over our bower,
Shining and swift departs, departs.
Time to-night
Has quickened his flight
To follow awhile our bounding hearts.

V.

Far off the monarchs march to war
Amid the trumpet's storming tones,
And frowning worship Victory's star
Upon their sword-illumined thrones.
The noise of chain and cannon dire
Rolls bleakly through the barren hours.
Sing to the lyre, close round the fire,
Our only chains are chains of flowers.
Hour upon hour,
Over our bower,

Shining and soft departs, departs,
Time, though a king,
Has quickened his wing
This night to follow our bounding hearts.

VI.

Loud on the roof the tempest moans,
And mirth would last as loud and long,
But yonder bell, in trembling tones,
Has blended with our ceasing song.
The children drowse, the girls retire
To dream of love and fortune's smile.
Farewell, old lyre and friendly fire,
And happy souls, farewell awhile.
Hour after hour,
Over our bower,
Mellow and mild, departs, departs.
Now Time will sing
Beneath his wing
A soothing song to our dreaming hearts.

Song of Life.

I.

Close, old companions, round my hearth,
  This little harbour of the sea
That beats around us from our birth,
  And let us muse o'er destiny:
If strong we dash the waves aside
  And breast the currents, brave the blast;
If weak we float along the tide,
  And, like the strongest, sink at last:—
Onward thus, a charmed star
  Floats our soul through life away,
As the world whose dust we are
  Drifts through waves of night and day.

II.

Great Nature measured forth the hours,
  While dim we lay in breathless trance,
And cast our pre-appointed powers
  To shape themselves by circumstance:

Yet gives she still through day and dark
Some joy to cheer, some dream to bless :—
Man's true Vocation 's in the work
That yields the largest happiness.

III.

Gauge well your spirit's strength, and note
The space that suits it prosperously;
Then launch your war-bark or your boat
On shallow stream or soundless sea.
A peaceful heart in summer's breath,
Float toward your rest with pinions furled;
A daring soul in love with death,
Storm through the waters of the world.

IV.

The Spirit of the expanse around
Shapes all conditions to our weal;
None miss the truths they cannot sound,
Or sigh for joys they cannot feel;
Still moon-bright memory sways the years
That roll from life's declining shore,
And sorrow wings to purer spheres
The heart that earth consoles no more.

V.

Come, let us make our heaven of earth
By living for bright truth alone;
Old books will crown our simple hearth
With pleasures purer than a throne.
Love, peace, and hope at least are ours
While yet our bosoms breathe the day;
And from the grave the guardian Powers
Will light our souls, and lead the way.

The Old Epicureans.

(A PALACE AT CORINTH.)

I.

Winter's snow is on the earth,
And the stream has ceased its flowing;
Let us close around the hearth
While the gloomy winds are blowing.
Where yon temple rises whitely
Lo! the great old pines are riven;
But the dead are calm in Heaven,
And the hearth is burning brightly.
Give me thy dear hand awhile,
And let me press it, while before us
Joyously the rich wines flow;
And let me see thy dear old smile
A little while, a little while,
For death looks through the spaces o'er us,
And we know not where we go.

II.

Death is absolute as thunder!
Time is wasting, youth has flown:
Plucking flowers, the earth we wander,
'Till we pluck the poisoned one.
It may drowse us into sleep
Numb as the unfathomed sea,
Or wake us unto dreams that keep
The hell-watch of eternity—
But down, ye phantasies that lower
Along the earthly wanderer's way;
Each cup will prove your terror's less.
And drink—kindle the spirit's power,
And flush our temples through the grey:
Live as a God one dazzling hour,
Though in the next we pass away
To higher heavens—or nothingness.

III.

Whence come we?—whither pierce the sky?
Imagination o'er the tomb
Drops its rich wings, and Reason's eye
Fails, dazzled in the maze of doom.
What end has life?—To melt and fuse
The radiant soul with clay and tears,
To hoard a little love, and lose
By death that wealth of all our years.

Drink, mortal, drink—upon their throne
The Gods are happy, but our race
Friendless as yonder planet lone
Above the empty northern space.

IV.

Lo! night has stilled the cities' roar,
The mart is closed, the banner furled,
And broods the ghostly heaven o'er
The varied races of the world.
Beneath the drifting northern glow
The giant Scythian shepherds sleep,
In mighty forests roofed with snow—
In pathless pastures white with sheep.
In far Thibet, intent on gain,
Along some moonlit range is rolled
The many-carriaged merchant train
Laden with odorous musk, and gold!
The sophist Greek forgets his theme,
The Roman drowses o'er his wars;
And mortal spirits, lost in dream,
Are silent as the setting stars.

V.

Come, yet another cup we'll drink—
One sumptuous draught, though death be nigh:
Ah! while the soul can dream, can think,
It bathes in fresh eternity:

'Mid currents of electric blood
Great feiry fancies sway the breast,
Like golden storms along the flood
Of Autumn, streaming to the west.
Yet, even this hour, though through the bars
Of earth the soul springs deified—
The silent demons, eyed like stars,
Are coldly watching by our side.

VI.

Thus shall we fire our aged clay
Till every pulse shall flash with thought,
Still burning for th' eternal day
Whose glory all our sires have sought.
Yet even when spaceward we shall roll
When earth is drifting from our sense,
And some great planet draws our soul
With dread unseen omnipotence,
Roses shall glow that very hour
Around the brow whose God departs,
Though dark Nepenthe's shadow flower
Is drooping o'er our silent hearts.

My Violon.

Within my little lonely room
Where many a crimson evening shines,
I cheer away the falling gloom
With songs beneath the casement vines:
Sweet memories haunt the lingering day
That hovers o'er each golden sun—
Each tune I play
Brings back a ray—
Sing to me, sing, old Violon.

Old friends, your homes in sunset shine,
The trees around them softly sigh,
While o'er the rolling distant brine
You sail from home and poverty;
I see your vessel far away
I see your faces sad and wan
Turned where the day
Sets wild and grey—
Sing of them, sing, old Violon.

Old books, companions of my youth
And friends of age still brightening earth,
How oft we've mused above your truth,
How often smiled upon your mirth!
Your date recalls the happy years
And all who blessed them past and gone—
Their smile appears
'Mid falling tears—
Sing to them, sing, old Violon!

Companionless amid the days
I wander in the Autumn blast,
Through fields and trees, and well-known ways,
The silent scenery of the past.
Like friends the distant mountains smile
O'erflowed by the departing sun—
A little while,
A little while,
Sing to them yet, old Violon.

Yon pale autumnal cloud of white
Stood in the cold east all day long,
And in the silent sky to-night
Under the full moon hears my song.
My fancy whispers mournfully

'Tis some dear spirit beloved and gone,
Come back to see
Old earth and me—
Sing to her, sing, old Violon.

Ah! soon, sweet friend, thy aged strings
To stranger fingers shall resound;
But, when to thy rich murmurings
The joyous dancers beat the ground,
Through the gay window with the moon
I'll look ere mirth and dance be done,
And list thy tune,
Though soon, too soon
Death wafts me from my Violon.

The Lifted Veil.

As oft twixt sleep and wake I lie,
  Thy face looks through my closing eyes,
  With cheerful love that never dies,
And thy dear voice seems murmuring nigh.

Old ways, too, that I failed recall,
  Though Memory, stirred by heart and brain,
  Oft throbbed to make them true again,
And flash a lamp beneath the pall.

Come to my thankful heart once more,
  And the sweet light of parted days
  Floats toward me as a star whose rays
Are kindled on some sunset shore.

And while I strain for transient truth,
  And o'er the deep past broods my heart,
  To snatch from death a little part,
And gleam stray memories like a Ruth—

Quick as from some enchanter's rod
Lives out thy look and tone and all :—
I burst in loving tears, and fall
In prayer for thee before our God.

Old evening lights across me roll,
And like the resurrection blast
Electric comes the living Past,
And makes all present to my soul.

An Irish Mother's Dream.

I.

One night, as the wind of the Winter blew loud,
And snow swathed the earth, like a corse in its shroud,
An aged Mother mused in her dim cottage shed,
O'er the young soldier-son of her heart far away,
Where the cannon flames red o'er the low dying dead,
And the desolate Camp bleakly spreads in the day·
And near stood her Daughter, with sad strained smile,
And kind cheek of care, that long weeping had worn,
As she whispered, "Now sleep, dearest Mother, awhile—
God is good, and our Dermot will surely return."

II.

The poor Mother turned on her pillow, and there
Soon slept the kind sleep Heaven sheds on our care.
Silence filled the dusk chamber—the low ashy hearth
Sunk lower, and noiselessly sifted the snow

O'er the white, spacious girth of the cold, solemn
earth,
Where the muffled moon fitfully glimmer'd below;
But vanished the while are her visions of fear,
And passed, for a space, is her sorrow and pain;
For an angel has wafted her soul from its sphere,
And in dreams she beholds her own Dermot again.

III.

Dear joy, how she loves him! A long year has passed
Since she kissed his pale forehead, and hung on his
breast;
She looks in his face—'tis the same, still the same—
Still soft are those eyes as the dew on the sod:
No thirst for the game of wild battle or fame
Have lessened their love for her, thanks be to God!
But away! they are speeding o'er mountain and
moor—
O'er city, and forest—o'er tempest and tide;
But little she heeds of their terrors, be sure,
While that son of her bosom seems still at her side.

IV.

Lo! at length they have passed the wild ocean, and
stand
On a summit that looks o'er a desolate land;

Far off, the great fortresses loom o'er the spray,
Anear, the bleak tents drift the slopes of the ground;
And a sense of decay fills the solitude gray,
For an army in ruins is scattered around.
"And is it for this," said the poor dreaming soul,
"My Dermod has wandered from home's blessed air?—
Here Death fills the wind blowing keen from the Pole—
Here the Pestilence strikes what the cannon may spare."

V.

They passed through the streets of the tents lying still—
They passed by the trenches that ridge the brown hill—
They saw the pale faces that famine has worn;
They pace where the wounded lie lonely and lost—
Where the corse, cannon-torn, to its red bed was borne—
Where the poor frozen sentinel died on his post.
"Ah, why, Dermod, why did you cross the wide foam,
To fortune, my child, in this land of the dead?
Sure we'd plenty at home—there was better to come:
Why, for this, did you leave me, acushla?" she said.

VI.

"I thought as you grew fond and brave by my side,
No sorrow could cloud us—no fate could divide;
I fancied the day when our home would grow bright,
With the smile of some *coleen* I'd cherish for thee—
When I'd sing through the night by the hearth's ruddy light,
With your boy, my own Dermod, asleep on my knee;
And when, circled round by a few happy friends,
Old age drooped my head, after many a year,
As I passed to my God, through the death that he sends,
The kind Father would bless me, and you would be near."

VII.

Still close in the gloom seems he standing by her;
But hark! 'tis the drum, and the camp is astir;
And a sound fills the air, from the hill to the star,
Like an earthquake, along the wild bastion it runs,
While echoes afar roar the voice of the War,
As it doubles its thunder from thousands of guns,
And she wakes. In the gleam of the pale morning air
One gives her a letter—soon, soon is it read;
But a low piteous moan only speaks her despair—
"Ah, Mother of God! my own Dermod is dead!"

The Death-House.

In the dim, kindling dawn,
The mountain masses lie,
All channelled by the night of waters wan,
Whose leaden-coloured skirts trail o'er the sea,
Lessening and grey, to the far cloudy Lee,
Thinning the sky.
Yes, the wat'ry night is o'er,
And cheerily the East is glowing,
O'er the Old House on the Moor,
Over the rainy brooklet flowing,
Through the turfy land;
And day comes light in hand,
Sunning through the garden there,
Sunning up the red brick rear,
While, dark in the chill shadows stand,
The tall elms fronting the dumb door.

All through the moaning night
Death had come that window nearer,
Silent, blinded from the light,

In the upper chamber,
And the dying grows the dearer,
With the minutes' flight;
And the dawn looks sick and fearful,
To that friend-group, weary, tearful,
Straining heart-thought to remember
His good deeds and ways: and now
The searching chill wind lifts each flower,
In the tangled garden's bower,
And the dying lifts his brow,
Asking faintly of the hour.

All through the hollow day,
Soars the pale sun, downward staring,
On the red roof, ivy-gay;
On the heart-sick friends within,
On the hamlet little caring.
But no life the hour can rouse
In that dusk and blinded house,
And the noonlight and the din
Come not to fear-muffled ears,
And lids o'erheaped with tears.
From the garden day has faded,
Passing round to Western realms,
And the house askance is shaded
By the phantom Elms!

And now the sunset flames
On the windows of the village,
Slanting wine-red streams
On the furrows of the tillage;
On the stalks whose leaves are shed;
And the weak, wick-blinded taper
Dims in the death-room,
As 'twere struggling in a vapour
Of the choking tomb.
Still that west is staring red,
Even as death draws near the bed;
And the elms, knee deep in loam,
Standing fronting that old home,
Fill the windows with their gloom.

A-sudden—and 'tis gone!—
Hamlet, house, and field are grey;
And, with a weary moan,
The soul has passed away.
Fills the house with prayer and mourning
For the good—the ne'er returning—
And the sister that he loved
Stands with tearless eyes apart,
Getting that pale face by heart,
Soon to be removed.
Still his hand in his son's hand,
Warm and weak is lying;

All that's left behind!—
And, through the strange sky cloudy-lined,
The keen windy stars are prying;
And in the night the three Elms stand,
Dark, and stirred, and sighing,—
Full of memories in the wind!

The Return.

I.

At length beneath the roof we rest
That sheltered us when life was young,
In this old window toward the west,
Where oft in twilight's glow we sung:
Still bright 's the mountain's starry rim,
Still fresh the trees around the door;
But where are they—the lost, the dim,
Whose forms shall light it never more?

II.

Ah, me! how many an afternoon
Along yon ivied lane we went,
The low wind blowing from the moon,
The dead leaves breathing wintry scent;

The ruin gloomed the holy ground,
The fields were full of fading light,
The beat of barrack drum around
The dead red west rolled with the night.

III.

Remembrest thou old summer time,
When, the long studious day being o'er,
Entranced we sat in talk sublime
Drawn from some gloried page of yore?
Rich fancies, themes abstruse, old songs
From varied lips were heard to rise—
Ah! where are those old spirit throngs,
Long passed through yonder crimson skies?

IV.

Perchance with silent eyes to-night
They gaze upon us from afar;
Perchance their dreams from spheres of light
Float toward us on this green old star;
And each old friend—each long lost hour,
And field, and book, and song, they knew,
Strikes o'er their memory with the power
That strews these tears between us two.

V.

The dim wind moans along the hill,
  The ivy round the casement shakes,
The full moon rises slow and still,
  And drifts the field with silver flakes.
Then let us o'er this shadow'd bowl
  Clasp these old hands, and while the breath
Flows through us, charm the silent soul
  With dreams of vanished joy and death.

Song.

I.

Oh, ask me not again if thou,
Sweet spirit, art beloved by me;
Give not that timid terror breath,
While here I gaze upon thy brow,
With faith and fond security
That cannot change with life or death.

II.

Though we have loved but little space,
As fixed and constant are our souls
As spirits in eternal rest;
As yonder stars that richly trace
The brow of Heaven when twilight rolls
Along the forests of the west.

III.

My heart is like a music shell,
From which no echoed murmur slips;
But place it, dear one, to thine ear,
Thine own shall answer to its spell,
And both shall breathe from mutual lips,
"Thy love is here, thy love is here."

The Portrait.

I.

Wandering through a gallery in the twilight,
Looked we on a picture on the wall,
As the yellow evening left the skylight,
And the gloom fell hovering like a pall.

II.

One of History's murderers looked upon us,
Olive face, and dark and hollow eye,
That amid the darkness seemed to shun us,
Restless, fearful, furtive as a lie.

III.

Underneath his bonnet's diamond cluster
Thought upon the forehead lay awake;
And around his curved lips a lustre
Glimmer'd, like the writhing of a snake.

IV.

By his side, amid the scaly tinsel,
Goldening all o'er his crimson robe,
Lay, amid the light of Titian's pencil,
In the folds the lurking dagger probe.

V.

Still upon him fell the dusky glow,
Though the darkness walked the corridors;
And the great bell of St. Angelo
Boomed across us from the Tiber's shores.

VI.

It was midnight when he sought the Tower,
Standing on the sombrous palace skirt;
'Twas yon very hollow bell that, that hour,
Waked the angel in his ruined heart.

VII.

Short the struggle with that shape immortal,
Fiend-like Will arose with iron hand;
Chasing her across his spirit's portal,
Waving through the gloom his fiery brand.

VIII.

"Wherefore, though my father, should I spare him?
Tyrant is he unto me and all;
Shall I, coward, live to hate and fear him?—
Dashed away the human tear drops fall.

IX.

"What to me are ties that he has torn?
He is but the same as common men;
Do we leave the beast to range or mourn
When we leave him slaughtered in his den?

X.

"I was born for power. Thousands near me
Pant to marshal under my command;
What care I if some few minions fear me,
When my sword is master of the land?

XI.

"Fate stirs its voice within me; I obey it.
Shall I wish the gift and fear the giver?
Worship my ambition and betray it?"—
Darkness falls upon his soul for ever!

XII.

On a couch within the lonesome Tower
Lies the old man in a restless drowse;
As amid his dreams he felt his power
Fading from him in the princely House.

XIII.

He has fathomed long his son's ambition,
Watched him winning vassals to his cause;
Laughed a laugh of bitter, proud derision,
"Why to seize my kingdom should he pause?"

XIV.

But of late his power is growing stronger;
He has seen it tried by many a test:
"As he lives, this play shall last no longer;
Son of his no more shall break his rest."

XV.

As the deep bell from the river boomed,
Carries the wish that slumber cannot hide;
And he wakes to see the son he doomed
Standing like a demon by his side.

XVI.

"What is this, and wherefore comest thou hither?"
Front to front their eyes with hatred glow;
"Knowest not, minion, that my will can wither
All thy boasted power, as with this blow!"

XVII.

Thickest midnight blackly fall and screen them,
Shut that deed for ever from the light;
Better the volcanos burst between them,
Blasting them to dust within their sight.

XVIII.

Better the great stars that watch their fury
Mouldered into blackness evermore,
Than such deeds should live in hellish echoes
Ringing round the planet's darkened shore.

XIV.

Heavy falls the grey and bloody figure
Beaten into death beside the porch!
As one with scorched hand and frightened rigour
Dashes out the blazing of a torch!

XX.

Worthless now as dust are his dominions—
Life a blank and power pale and dim;
Goldenly the mornings stir their pinions;
But 'tis midnight evermore to him.

XXI.

And he lives, though thousands throng his palace,
Ever with his angered God, alone,
Drinking torture from his jewelled chalice,
Reigning on his dread and burning throne!

Nuptial Song.

I.

Roll on, ye days! but slowly roll,
Fuse earth and sky each charm of thine,
'Till all without the happy soul
Seem rich with peace, love, breath divine;
Shed silent summer from the height
Each lingering charm is calm refined;
From yonder sun a finer light
From yonder sea a balmier wind.

II.

Rich mountains shining o'er the mead,
Rose sunsets sinking less and less;
Wild forest walks that winding lead
Into the heart of loneliness,
Grow stiller, fairer, yet a while,
And thou, sweet clime, that reignest o'er
The happy space, smile, deeper smile
'Mid blushes strewn from shore to shore.

III.

Oh, happy time, oh, wondrous time,
When love completed fills the hours,
And fancy flies with it sublime
To vaster worlds and richer bowers!
Oh, magic days, that crowning keep
The heart above the cast of doom!
Sweet morning moments soft as sleep,
Short twilight hours of precious gloom,—

IV.

Linger a little on that soul
Where full orbed fancy shines and plays;
Breathe through his heart whose pulses roll
To love's voluptuous cadences;
Linger a little on her brow,
Blue veined and fragrant, full of rest,
And o'er the sacred spirit now
That blessing yields but to be blest.

War!

I.

At length the great War that the Prophet foretold,
From his lone ocean prison, around us is hurl'd;
The mandate is given—the lightnings are roll'd,
From the long gather'd clouds on the brow of the world!
Oh, who may declare how the Nations shall rise,
When peace scatters light o'er the tempest of doom?
Vague forms of the future are shaped in the skies,
Where the Cossack and Christian contend in the gloom:
Rise, Demons of Force—weep, Angels of Light—
Our crescent star rolls for a space into night.

II.

Far off, 'mid the wastes of his many-zoned land,
The Despot, enthroned o'er the pomp of the War,
Grasps Glory's dead trump with a warrior's hand,
And clarions a prayer unto Victory's star.
Through the white stately streets of his city, this hour,
Swells the mustering host's multitudinous hum,

And the great bells are tolling from temple and tower,
'Mid the trumpet's drear blast, and the throb of the drum.
Rise, Demons of Force—weep, Angels of Light—
The Scythian is gathering the Armies of Night.

III.

Lo, southward, where oft they have traversed of yore,
Through the Mediterranean's azure expanse,
By the ruins of Greece—by the swart Afric shore,
Speeds on to the war the bright phalanx of France.
Blow, favouring winds, on the warrior's path—
Rise, memories of Moscow, through bosom and brain;
Now the deep passion'd Fury, retributive wrath,
Gives a flame to our chivalry once, once again:
Speed, Spirits as bright as the Sun and as warm,
But fierce in your strength as the white Russian storm.

IV.

Lo! England, aroused from her torpor at last
By the slow Scythian terror, moves sullenly forth:
Like full feathered eagles aslant on the blast,
Her thunder brimm'd Fleets surge along to the North.

Oh, what may arise when from Cronstadt's grey steep
The iron-tongued destinies roar through the fire—
The sea pride of Britain a wreck on the deep?
The snow City's towers a funereal pyre?
Speed on—o'er the bleak wintry skies of the town
The vengeance-browed God of Siberia looks down.

V.

Yes, the tempest's a-wing—over ocean and glade,
The Hosts hurry on to the plains of the War,
Where throbs the low pulse of the quick cannonade,
From the thundering heart of the battle afar.
While the Slave strains his gaze to the Eastern space,
As the shadow and storm of the time is unfurled,
For that glory long sought by each suffering Race
In the new dawn of Destiny folding the world;
Where, elected by nations, the Sovereign *Right*
May dictate a new code from his palace of light.

The Emigrant's Voyage.

EVENING.

The white sails are filled, and the wind from the shore
Blows sad from the hills we shall visit no more;
And the ship slowly moves o'er the ocean at rest,
From the land of our hearts, in the light of the West.

Though few are the friends on the land's sinking rim,
Yet our eyes, straining into the sunset, grow dim;
We are leaving for ever the walks where we strayed,
And the graves where the dust of our dearest is laid.

Now twilight has covered the isle in its gloom;
Dark the village, and lost the old place of the tomb;
And we see but yon dusk mountain line in the light,
We have watched from our cottage doors many a night.

Ah, the stars on the ocean are glimmering nigh,
Like the eyes of the dead looking up at the sky;
And our ship speeds along as heart-wearied we sleep,
'Mid the waters of God, and the clouds of the deep.

MORNING.

Full stretched are the sails, dim and dewy the spars,
On the spray-wetted deck fall the light of the stars;
And the blue lonely morning breaks coldly, as we,
In the wind, cleave the hurrying heaps of the sea.

All alone in the world, without riches below,
We have memories that wander wherever we go;
And wild sorrow reasons, 'mid tears falling fast,
That the present may still draw its light from the past.

Oft of mornings to come, from our windows we'll bend,
And look on the sun—that bright following friend;
Still fondly remembering his glory has shone
On the land that we love, and the friends who are gone.

Oft, at even, when labour is o'er for a while,
Will our hearts travel back to our own blessed Isle;
Across the great sea we have traversed in gloom,
And hover in prayer by the old lonely tomb.

Yes, spirits beloved, though your home were as far
From our world-wearied hearts as the loneliest star,
Our prayers shall arise, from the far foreign clime,
Oh, many, and many, and many a time.

We will hear the sweet voice, that o'er earth sounds no more,
Still murmuring for us from the Heaven's happy shore;
We will hear those dim footsteps, at grey silent morn,
That paced our lost home long before we were born.

Old scenes, where we wandered together, shall rise—
The fair window landscape—the soft, rainy skies;
The old green-patched hill, where the dewy light plays—
Where your shadows oft passed, on the old summer days.

Not alone, not alone, will we labour and roam,
Where your memories linger we still have a home.
Still treading, in fancy, the paths ye have trod,
Until death leads us up to our dear ones and God.

The First Pyramid.

Diodorus Siculus, speaking of the origin of the Pyramids, states, among other traditions, one to the effect, that they were erected during the dynasty of a Scythian race, who having overrun Syria and Egypt, finally settled in Memphis and the neighbouring cities.

Once of an evening in the olden time,
Beside the Nile's sweet waters, in the cool,
A boy sat with an aged man, who poured
To eager ears the wonders of his youth.
A mighty man he was, of Scythian front,
And giant stature bent with toil and war,
But vigorous still; his thick and tawny beard,
Matted in curls, drooped on his sun dark breast;
Still on his brow, deep wrinkled through its grey,
A frowning cloud of battle memories hung,
And stubborn pride, scarce softened with his years.
But boy and grandsire were alike in form
And feature; lion-sinewed, giant-boned,
With ruddy blooded cheek, and large fierce eyes
Blue as the northern night. Before them flowed

The broad stream, swollen from the rainy hills
Of the far inland. O'er the pasture tracts
Drifted with feeding flocks the level beam
Struck on the town's great citadel beyond;
While desertward betwixt them and the sun
Sloped up one keen edged mountain Pyramid.

Then spake the boy, holding the old man's hand—
"Come tell me, grandsire,—for I still delight
To hear thy stories of the olden days,
And all that thou hast seen and done,—whence rose
Yon wondrous Tomb, completed ere my birth,
That I unto my sons, as thou to me,
May bear the record of its rise, and keep
The memory of our conquest near my heart,
Save as thou dost thy war-worn sword:—begin
With the far years when, in the distant home
Of our great race, you dwelt amid your flocks
In the strange days before my father was;
Or thou, amidst the chieftains of our king
Entombed yonder, sought the southern land."

Then spake the aged man, his resolute eye
Softened with memories the while:—"Alas
For those green plains where I was born, cold fields
Beyond the seas where I would leave my bones!
What though beneath yon broad Egyptian sun

We rule a conquer'd people, and ordain
Laws to a hundred tribes who pay us dues
Of gold, and corn, and oil; yet unto me
The land seems growing strange, nor can I tell
If our great Gods within the northern clouds
Follow their votaries hither; oft at night
Alone, or but with thee, the wish returns
Of visiting once more my native hills,
Where rest our race; but this may never come
To me or thee, and little matters it—
An old man's fancy only, nothing worth.

"Behold the space around, a fruitful realm,
Wide watered, guardian'd by a golden orb,
Whose spirit loves to swell the forest leaves,
To fill the fresh green fruits with summer juice,
To spread the plenteous seas of yellow corn
For many a sultry league around, and tinge
Their waving ears to ripeness in a moon.
Nor scants the vineyard or the pasture here;
A land of grapes, a land of snowy flocks,
Profuse in winter's riches, wine and wool;
Here too the merchant comes in surging barque,
Or peaceful camel train across the sands,
Weighed with all treasures of the distant shores;
Red Syrian fruitage and Arabian spice,
And India's spoil of ebony and gold:

Here too are wonders manifold; the swan,
White as the autumn moon amid the reeds,
Chants her own requiem, in love with death;
While, tinged with miracle as it would seem,
The fiery crested Phœnix spreads his wings
Purpureal in the noon, sailing the air
From his rich nest within the orient woods
Toward the Sun City's Temple in the south.
Not such the realm that sent our people forth;
A spacious region is it, crossed with hills
And deserts of wild pasture, where the night
Looks upon wandering flocks and swollen streams,
And mighty forests winter roofed with snow;
Far off, far off, beyond the isled sea
And summer wind it lies, a cloudy tract
Outspread beneath the wrath of storm and rain,
Cold as the dead, and watched by northern stars.

"There dwelt our people many a peaceful age
Amid their herds, until our greatest king,
Abaris, came to rule above the tribes:
No shepherd monarch he, but one whose soul
Panted for conquest; a great Scythian shape,
Audacious, fierce, with battle in his blood.
I was a stripling then, as now thou art,
And eager for new sights and wanderings.
For year by year the nations lying round

Had lost full many a tribe; migrating hosts,
They sought the distance south, and east, and west,
Searching for happier climes; and lured thereto
By tales the merchant sailing up our streams
Had told of wealthy provinces and shores,
Rich as the Autumn, spreading to the sky,
Fann'd by soft airs and close upon the sun.
At length our king summon'd his chiefs around
For council, and an edict followed soon,
Whereby our tribes were ordered to collect
In the great plain that from our Forest Town
Stretched far and wide. It was at Autumn's close,
The harvest of the land was gathered in,
And winter's store of corn secured for all
Who might remain, the women and the boys;
When from the regions north a giant train
Came flocking, eager for adventure all,
And all athirst for change. From a great mound
Upheaved within a night upon the plain,
Our king harangued the multitudes, and fired
Their hearts for conquest; dwelt upon their strength,
Their size, their numbers; pictured the rich realms
That southward spaced—the puny herds of men
Who peopled them—the glory and the spoil
That should be theirs; and sooth, but little need
Of words was there to stir them, for they felt
Their power, and sought occasion but to show

Their valour. As the monarch closed, a shout
Rent the grey clime, and from the shadowy clouds
That lay along the forests northward, roared
The thunder, as in echoes of acclaim,
An omen prosperous. Within a moon,
And ere the snow began to swathe the ground,
Our army, portioned in battalions vast,
Departed, moving by the stream that moved
Toward the eastern sea; and there arrived
Where closest came the jutting shores we crossed,
In raft and barque; but weary was the toil,
And perilous; for through that narrow cleft
The wintry waters of some inland sea
Found exit, and the raging billows frothed,
As choked within its strait the currents swept
Impetuous to the south. In time we passed,
Though dashed with some disaster, and at length
Tasted the Summer air, that over hill,
And stream, and forest floated from the dawn.
Some weeks we moved along this novel clime,
As yet no city shone before our march,
And all unchallenged passed we on amid
A shepherd population poor and rude,
Ourselves in little. Then the land grew changed,
The herbage scanted, rock and sand o'erspread
The prospect southward; and at length upon
The dizzy, glaring desert rim we stood,

As on the beach of some wide barren sea
That spaces in the blaze of lonely day.
Oh! weary was our journeying through that waste;
Scorched and athirst, across the pathless sands
We hurried toward the endless horizon
That mocked us, looming on our van at morn,
From gates of fire, and spreading round at noon,
The flaming circle of the intense clime
That closed us, prison-like; then famine fell
Silent upon our weary multitudes,
And o'er the forms of many, horse and man,
Strewing our path 'twixt camp and camp, each day
Looked death, fierce-visioned, from the setting sun.
Oh! weary time, when man and nature, faced
In opposition, combated; when we
Enervate tented 'neath the smouldering noon,
Or rousing with the cool of eve, stretched out
Long midnight marches under silent stars.
At length, when many a burning day had risen
And set upon our weary wanderings,
Low hills appeared, and frequent grew the palm,
A freshening sight: for in our travel there,
Across the shelterless and shimmering sands,
One moon had risen and died within its orb,
And now another, crescenting the west,
Paled in the growing dawn, as eagerly
Our host moved toward it; 'Twas but yet half day

When from a mountain summit, in advance,
Whence came a sweet air, like a forest breath,
Our vanguard halting shouted, as they held
Aloft their wind-stretched banners: ere an hour
We reached the cool green height, and thence beheld—
O vision worthy of a God!—the sea!

"Around its marge a realm of plenty glowed,
With breadths of corn and regions rich with dew:
While, to the south, a gloried City rose,
Deep harboured, and with many a marble round
Of citadel and turret, shrine and bower.
A space of splendour seemed it, a bright land
Of palaces and waters; by its shores
A wide armada, many-masted, lay
Glooming the sea; while inland stretching far,
Thick-fruited woods, with sultry tracts of spice,
Scented the sky up to the morning clouds.
Awhile, in wonder, gazed we on this scene,
Then pushing nearer to a shadowy steep,
That sentinelled the city, gazed below.
Broad through its streets a plenteous river flowed,
Fed with the rains of southern hills beyond,
And mirroring many a temple on its wave,
While conch-shaped barges ebon-ribbed with gold,
Came oared along the shining space beneath
The crimson floating of their gonfalons.

High o'er the roofs, just glittering in the morn,
A pillared shrine upon a steep arose,
White as some surging pile of Summer cloud,—
Levels of flashing steps ascending shone
Up to its spacious portal, swarmed with shapes
In many-coloured garbs, and glittering arms;
While rolling outward from its domed hall,
Filled with the dawn, a golden gong swung forth
Its globe of tone, widening in circles down
O'er hill and river and across the sea,
As though a Sun were sounding; while afar,
Upon an azure-waved promontory,
The last of land that jutted oceanward,
An altar plumed with smoke arose, and priests
White-garbed around it in the sacred calm.

"Nor long we gazed, half doubting, on this scene
Of peace and wealth, when through the city sped
Sudden alarm: from tower and citadel
The consternating trumpets rang, and joined
Their blasting with the multitudinous cry
Of hurrying hosts, who snatched their arms, and rushed
To man the battlements, while all the town,
Filling with terror and with turmoil, shook.
Our king, surrounded by his chiefs the while,
Held council, for the army that he led
Scarce counted one unto each hundred there

Arming for battle; yet no pause made he;
Fear knew him not, for truest valour sees
But victory, even though 'mid the thick array
Of foes out-numbering, its resolved arm
Owns but a single sword. To the combat swift
Adown the mountain side they marched, though worn
With toil and desert travel. I the while
(Alas that it was so!) upon a hill,
Encompassed by some hundred northern sons,
Stood sentinel, and scanned the space beneath
As swept our forces onward, and as formed
The enemy's battalions round the wall.
Then through the pillar'd streets the Tyrian king,
Seated as on some moving throne, careered
Toward the eastern gates, and wild acclaim
Rang from the roofs, thick thronged with citizens,
And trumpets storming from the skyey towers
Filled the bright air with triumph as he passed.
Before him roll'd the frowning equipage
Of warlike chariots; on the plain outspread
A serried host of foot, in steely shields,
With coloured banners flouting in the glare;
While, dizzied through the dust of march, the ranks
Of bright innumerate spearsmen shook the light
In sparkles o'er them moving. On the wings
Long ebon lines of horse, besprent in foam,
Arabian chivalry, with sword and plume

Advanced; while, on the desert's hazy rim,
Thick swarms of bowmen, fleet and fierce, afar
Scour'd to and fro, like thunder mists that wreathe
The darkened plain ere from the sultry South
Some huge storm bursts in lurid fire and hail.

"Just as the day grew broad above the ground,
Horsed on a mighty steed, Abaris rode
Along his van, and, pointing to the foe,
Moved on with stately strides. I see him now—
A giant armour'd in rude gold; his beard,
Matted in tawny curl, majestic flowed
Over his cuirass; his great sworded arm
Levelled like death; while round him breathed an air
Of power, from gesture, attitude, and brow,
Beneath whose folds strong resolution lay
In eyes that glittered like the stormy stars.
Then, in that hideous pause that spaced between
The battle rush, our monarch called him near
A horseman, while he said—'Take thou this bow,
And, galloping to yonder lines, demand
The strongest there to bend it: let them learn
Who 'tis they come against.' The soldier, swift,
Seizing the mighty weapon, cleft the air,
And soon in parley we beheld him stand;
But as we gazed, one from the hostile throng
Round edging from the rest, with treacherous blade,

Stabbed him to earth. Abaris gave a cry—
And, circling o'er his helm a furious sword,
Signalled the onset. For a little space
Their dusty armour in the gallop clanged,
And then a shout rose from the squadron'd foe,
And then another answer'd them, like storm,
Or thunder double-echoed from the hills—
The broad vans mingled, and the fight began.

"Long hours it raged, and silent grew the town,
Poised in suspense, dumb with expectancy;
Afar an earthquake seemed to shake the plain
From th' armies meeting with the column'd shock
Of rushing squadrons and great glittering lines
Of bearded swordsmen, striking as they fell.
Upon a hill above the fighting sands
Our slingers stood, levelling a whistling death
Where'er the enemy showed in thickest rank.
Our horsemen plied the centre, or rode down
The dense and waspish clouds of bowmen, flying,
And backward drifting ruin as they flew.
Thus through the day they fought; but when the sun
Flamed on their iron'd lines, dismay came down,
While victory, long doubtful in the scale,
Rose, cresting ours with fire. Then through the streets
The wail of women rose at intervals,
Piteous and shrill; then flying trains were seen,

With lifted arms appealing, as the fight
Roll'd nearer, and the warriors, dashed with blood,
Came tottering in retreat from the dark plain.
By shrine and temple troops of girdled slaves
Gathered in dusky masses: white-robed priests
Around their altars offered sacrifice,
And uttered loud propitiatory prayers,
With gloomy incantations intermixed,
Unto the guardian gods that helped them not.
Then, as the terror wilder grew, and rolled
Nearer the cloud of death, the citizens,
With horse and chariot fled, bearing away
Whate'er of treasure they could gather then,
Or, with despairing gesture, flung them down,
'Till all the hurrying o'erwhelmed streets
With broider'd robe and golden vessel gleamed,
And life alone grew precious in that hour.
Just as when o'er some barque the tempest strikes,
And darkness fills the sky, the mariners,
Each calling on his god, wail out their fear,
And heave their freighted treasure down the deeps,
Scattering the swollen sea with merchandize—
So stricken with eclipse of hope they fled:
But ever nearer the besiegers came,
And ever louder grew their conquering cries;—
The gates were burst, the battle shook the wall,
And the great city's shadowed interspace

Seemed filled with ruin. Then a little while
And blazed the depths of sky around, alight
With burning palace, temple, citadel;
And o'er the ghastly town the fire-sea swept,
Rapid and red, as night came gloomily on
With storm upon its wings. Nor more I saw;
For all above was canopied in flame,
And all beneath was filled with massacre,
Wailings of death, and shouts of victory,
The fall of giant towers stunning the ground
With thunder; lastly, and o'er all, the roar
Of the devouring fires that from the town,
'Twixt wall and wall, for many a ruthless mile,
Sprang upward, volumn'd in one pyramid.
Ah, well should I remember me that night,
Victorious night, whose grief was yet to come.
Our camp was fixed, the noise of battle o'er,
The watches set, the skins of wine unloosed:
From the dim desert skirt our straggling horse
Rode in with prisoners; weary with the day
Were all, nor rose there sound, save where the fallen,
Wan with their wounds, and breathing many a moan,
Lay, thickly furrowing the plain, for miles,
In the red glare of the consuming town;
Or sometimes, swooning on the gust, the tramp
Of weary fugitives, whose armour clashed
In echoes dismal, as they fled afar,

Through haze and sand. The midnight star had set,
When on a torch-lit couch, within his tent,
Rested our giant king. Beside him lay
His glutted sword, nigh worn with bloody toil,
While gathered round, his captains fierce of face,
Though sorrow-saddened, gazed upon his brow
As death came o'er it; all unwounded he,
As thou art boy, but dying from the toil
Of victory, the victim of himself,
For through the day his solitary sword
Had like a phalanx wasted. He, the while,
Upraising looked upon his crimsoned chiefs
And said, "Swear by yon northern heaven, whose Gods
We worship, that ye bear my body hence,
Even to the limit of your victories,
And o'er me pile a mighty sepulchre,
Whose strength, eternal as our native hills,
Shall memorize our conquest."—And they sware:
Then grasping the red weapon to his breast,
He turned upon his couch and slept the sleep.

"Thus fell our king, even with that city's fall.
Nor were we then unmindful of his word
And will of burial. In a jasper tomb,
Snatched by our warriors from a burning shrine,
We gave him sepulchre with Scythian rites;
The while the dusk embalmers of the land

Plied cunningly their art, and o'er his form
Shower'd gum, and berry, and Arabian spice,
And grain of gold, and the rich opiate dust
That breathes morphean odours o'er decay.
But this achieved we paused not, though around
Lay thick the riches of a ruined world,
Save for a time to rest our weary strength
And dream of conquest onward. For a space
We revelled, nor did luxuried excess,
As falls on some, enervate our desire
Of war and travel; nor the wines of earth,
Then bubbling in our blood, tame one fierce heart
Braced in the vigorous cold of northern snows.
Our worthiest chief we crowned, and ere the moon
That silvered o'er the clay of him we lost
Had dwindled in the west, we struck our tents,
And, heaped with treasure, marched upon the south.
Proud regions lay before us, while behind,
Up from the smouldering empire the great smoke
Roll'd seaward, like the shadow of its doom.

"What need to speak of other battles fought,
Of marches, sieges, skirmishes, when all
Their scattered rays of glory, in one flame,
Would show beside our first great victory,
Even as a camp fire matched against the sun.
Soon to this dusk Egyptian realm we came,

Nor essayed conquest further, for the noise
Of our resistless sally filled the world,
And all, from Syria's cedar'd hills unto
Those silent learned cities of the Nile,
Gave peaceful token of submission.
And here, within this land of mystery
And rest, we deemed it fitting to erect
Yon tomb, beside the aged river's wave.

"Full twenty winters lasted the huge toil,
And twenty summer deluges outspread
Mirrored the sloping structure as it rose
Still higher and still higher toward the sun.
And sooth, it was a wondrous sight to see
The subject peoples labouring o'er the land—
A mingled multitude, in hue and form
Diverse: some from the river islets came
Where Nylus branches oceanward; a race
Languid as leaves of drooping palm at noon,
Yet serpent subtile: some from the realms along
The barren desert's lone sea skirt of sand,
Where roll the waves o'erblown in profuse foam
From the wide north, of hardier temper they:
And others from the unknown inland trooped,
With brows all blackened by the heat, and eyes
Bright as the viper's; lithe and ebon shapes,
Quick-footed as the ostrich. By their side

Some fair as snow, complexioned like the rose,
The habitants of Syria's mountains they,
Where the fierce noon is tempered with the wind,
And soft clouds o'er the cedars sift the dew
In valleys sweet of lonely Lebanon.
But not alone from Afric, or the shores
Northward and near, they came: some from the east,
With faces dusky as their native soil,
Enswathed in wreaths of snowy silk, with caps
Of broad-leaved rushes dry; nor wanted they
Of armour, sword, and shield, and javelin;
Tribes wandering from their many-watered home,
Beneath the clear hung stars of Indian skies
Toward the red sunset and the sea: while last,
Darkening the river's banks, a scattered train
Came flocking wild and sadly from the foam
And echo of the rainy cataracts,
And from the lonely Mountains, southward still,
Whose tip-toe summits watch the silent stream,
As oceanward it journeys through the sands,
From its vague fount upon the skirt of the world.
Such were the subject tribes that day by day
Came drifting on before our horsemen's spears,
Like shadows flying from the level rays
Of the low stormy moon; and here arrived,
Upon the plain we tented them, 'till round
Yon Tomb's great mountain base they stretched afar,

A mighty congregation. Then the toil
Began, and so beginning, knew no end,
Till twenty summers saw its summit crowned.
From level unto level, year by year
It rose, while swarmed those labouring multitudes
On high, or with concentered force beneath,
Plied hard the huge machinery, that heaved
With giant strain aloft the granite blocks
Colossal: then for leagues around its base
The trains of heavy oxen headlong wrought,
Dragging the uncouth masses on the ground
From mountain ranges southward, that each moon
Dwindling beneath our multitudinous toil,
Grew gapped with chasms against the hazy sky.
And all the air for miles was stirred with sound
Of clattering hammers, as the masons shaped
Each rock bulk for its place. Amid their ranks
Our soldiers, cased in shining iron, strode
Directing, for the purpose which we held
Had grown a passion strong as that of war;
And captain chief and soldier laboured then
With hand, heart, brain, to memorize our king,
Whose bones we'd borne through many a distant night
Secure in storm and battle; and to build
Against eternity his palace Tomb.

"Ah me! old years flow by me as I speak;

Well I remember those strong earnest days,
Well I remember listening on my watch
Upon some southern tower whose summit shewed
The distance opened to the Isles of palm,
And the long river shining as it came
In moonlight's silver silence by the towns.
There oft I've stood in old heroic hours,
And mused above the myriad tented fields,
Silent as death: where, ever and anon,
The shield and spear of pacing sentinel
Emerging, sparkled in the starry air;
While on the sloping banks the camel herds
Lay quaint and quiet by the palms, and passed
The sluggish rafts of cedar on the wave,
Piled high with snowy marble blocks; when all
The world was lapped in calm, unbroken save
By the far strain of oars, or the sad song
The dusk slaves chanted to the pallid night.

* * * * *

Such is the past, but now old age appears,
And snows our brows in silence: better far
The storm, the battle, than the languid light
Peace sheds upon our lives from conquest's crown.
The nobleness is ever in the toil,—
Not in the gain. Yet in the future years,
Our race may move to higher thrones, and earn
Threefold dominion; and it is ordained
Our mightiest king shall have the mightiest Tomb,

Next to our first and greatest."

Here he closed.
A while the boy and grandsire silent sate;
Long since the sun had dropped beneath the sands,
And in the pause, the flowing of the stream
Swooned faintly from beneath upon their ears
Vague as the voice of Time, when to himself
He murmurs, musing as he wanders on.
Then toward the city, hand in hand they went,
Amid the darkness beaconed to the gate
By one great Temple pillar'd high in air,
Whose caverned portal flamed with lamp and urn.
The old man hurried onward, but the boy
All fancy-fired with memories of war,
And majesty eternized in its tomb,
Flashed yet one earnest glance, ere through the gates
He passed between its giant sentinels,
Where rose the mighty Pyramid grand and lone,
Crowned with the desert stars amid the night.

The Challenge.

A VERSE-MAKING HOLIDAY.

I.

One Summer day in moonlight's hush,
When tired with Cupid's tongueless calm,
A maiden rose, amid a blush
That floated through her forehead's balm,
And snatching up a little book,
Her lover's fancied treasury,
She whispered, with a frolic look,
"Now shall *I* write some poesy!"
Oh, happy, happiest summer day,
Oh, rosiest day within the skies,
When love, who stole his pen away,
Sate making verse before his eyes.

II.

'Twas in a window o'er the stream,
The charm began—he knew not how:
He flushed amid this dainty dream;
She pale, with fancy-knitted brow;

But when he sate no longer still,
  But cried out, filled with joy like wine;
"Hush," cried she, "idle boy, until
  I catch the stream's sound in a line:"—
Oh, magic time, when one sweet elf
  The faery days can thus renew,
When love, a little second self,
  Sate doing all he loved to do.

III.

Then scrawled he too some throng of words,
  To shape her beauty into rhyme;
Before the golden dawn the birds
  Sing sweeter far than other time;
Coy lights of noon-day smoothly slid
  O'er brow and form, and lingered there,
Kissed the red lip, and drooping lid,
  And crystal ear, and silken hair:—
But, ah! sweet fancy's magic power,
  That gilds the poorest things with grace,
Was dazzled into dark that hour,
  Or languished into commonplace.

IV.

The moated sunbeam crossed the room,
  Her silver scarf she cast away,
And, tranced in meditative gloom,
  Sate in her silken disarray;

Once more he sought her hand and sighed,
But on her brow there flitted fast
A tiny tempest, lightning eyed,
That lived a second's space—and passed!
Oh! but for one sweet azure look,
That after glowed, all tremblingly,
He'd thought, as close he closed his book,
That love had turned to poesy.

V.

And first, a village scene he sung:
Along some leafy evening road,
A group of lovers, bright and young,
Paced homeward: by the mountain stood.
The rounded setting sun, afar
The sheep bells tinkled in the light;
And o'er their roof one little star
Throbbed like the first low pulse of night:—
Thus for a line or so his lore
Took shape, but glancing from his book
He caught the blue eyes' beam—no more:—
His theme evanished with that look.

VI.

Again, from centuries far removed,
He tried to tinkle amorous strains
Of courtly couples who had loved
In bright Elizabethan reigns.

Within a stately palace room
A bearded knight and lady fair,
Beneath the casement's curtain gloom,
Were whispering in the summer air;
A comely curled page anigh
Stood fluting gentlest song, the while
Some lean-legged antic, quaint of eye,
With quibbles stirred the group to smile.

VII.

At length one verse completed grew,
A little verse, a dainty dream,
Love-tinctured, timidly he drew,
And chose her Earring for a theme;
For had he cast her form or soul
In song, he knew the lines would jar;
As easy could a troubled pool
Reflect some pure symmetric star.
So sung he there, at distance dear,
Her charms, nor angered their repose,
Like wooing wind that fondles near
The crimson of a perfect rose.

THE EARRING.

The other even, when the west
Was dim with gold, I saw thee rest
Within the casement, looking o'er
The summer woods and silent shore.

Thy fair head drooped amid the light,
The hair waved from the temples bright,
All in the glowing moon of May
You slept in silken disarray.

Amid the dusk one little ear
Dipt warm and white, and sparkling clear
A little Earring, that seemed hewn
From some rich planet, caught the moon.

It seemed as though it won its light
From lover's heart all sad and bright,
Refined to essence in the well
Of Cupid's cruel crucible.

It seemed like some rich thought, that came
From angel lips in meteor flame
To reach thy waking soul too late,—
Still hanging nigh its crystal gate.

Ah! could that little gem I see
But find a tongue, and whisper me
The words that pass it night and day,
What verses, sweet, I'd mould this May!

'Twere worth to be a minstrel then,
From Love's own wing I'd pluck my pen,
And listening in a mood divine
Trace its revealings in red wine.

What Wit, to please thy fancy fair,
Has sparkled round it in the air!
What solemn, bright Imaginings,
To touch thy spirit, waved their wings!

Perchance it is some amulet
Of music-might that guards thee, sweet,
For near thee every lip, I guess,
Turns to melodious tenderness.

And when, at night, asleep you lie,
What sprites trip o'er it daintily!
Aye, fairies rest upon it, ere
Into the soul thy dreams they bear.

Methinks I see one sprite, who far
Has wandered from some yellow star,
So tired with his bright burthen there
He throws himself on thy rich hair.

Who knows but 'mid their frolic feast,
In slumber you may be their guest,
Yes, banquet with them in your dream
On lily wine and cowslip cream.

Glow, little gem! and when from her
Low heart of love at night you stir,
Breathe one faint whisper, as you shine,
Of that whose echo dies in mine.

Then from her tablet, word by word,
A music dream on airy wings
Rose, versed by vermeil lips that stirred
The smooth air with thin tinklings.
Oh! such a song as poet hears
When with his heart alone he lies,
And lets it brim his happy years
With heaven's unsung melodies.

So sweet of phrase, so pure and bright,
That though his soul, with fancy fraught,
Oft culled, 'mid words of varied light,
Fit plumes to wing electric thought,
Yet, matched with utterance such as this,
Ceased charmless. Mute a moment there
He pressured on her hand one kiss,
And dropt his lyre in dear despair.

The contest o'er, they rose at last,
And toward the garden wandered on;
The fountain winked as down they passed,
And dipt in cloud the frolic sun.
White vapour scarfed the mountain's crest,
While blossomed plat and drooping trees
Seemed moved with meanings half expressed,
And stirred with tinkling silences.

As up and down the trellaced walk,
'Mid netted shadows, gusts of balm,
They paced in trance of sweetest talk,
Or happier yet content in calm.

At last, beneath white blossomed trees
That o'er the bubbled fountain's pool
Sung like the surge of summer seas,
Up in the blue air faint and cool
They sate; and as the day went down,
And hiveward sailed the honied bee,
And o'er the fragrant forest's crown
The low stars glimmer'd silently,
Love's fingers stirred his fancies' mine,
While from the deeps a planet flung
Its sapphire-tinctured flame divine
Upon her forehead while he sung:—

SONG.

Mark how the bubbles spark and dance
Beneath the fountain's volume;
They die, but still in jubilance
Flashes the sprayey column;
Ah! such, sweet friend, is life on earth,
And such the joys within it,
The fount that gave the bubble birth
May crush it the next minute!—
But be ours the bliss that, springing,
Drinks the light, and dies in singing.

Now all the world is growing dim,
The sunset flame is failing;
O'er wood and ocean's orange rim
The rain's blue drift is sailing;
Thus, sweet, may droop in tears the light
Of joy that goldens o'er us;
No matter: short is summer night,
And dawn is still before us:—
Still shall life have sweetest morrows,
While its griefs are summer sorrows.

They say when, in yon woodland brake,
Its guardian Faery dozes,
His fellows pluck the the blooms, and wake
His sleep with showering roses;
And thus, should love in dreams apart
Forget some hour to breathe them,
Heap, heap the rose-leaves on his heart,—
It ne'er will break beneath them.
Hearts that sleep in Cupid's bowers,
Must be waked with pelted flowers.

China.

Come, frolic fancy, wing the brain
That with the sun this summer day
Our soul may voyage past the main
Over the golden woods and plain,
And shining streams of calm Cathay.
'Tis done. With pinions spread, away
We coast the round of Earth, and stand
With morning light above the land,
Awaking through the mist of grey.

Lo! 'mid the leafy hills that lie
Along the lake in crescent calm,
Shines out some village sunnily,
'Mid mulberry groves and rows of palm.
From blue brick houses small and neat
The smoke ascends, and through the air
Clear laughters ring, and voices sweet
From porch and garden murmur there.
The casements open, bells are rung,
The matin feast prepared amain;
While round the housewife moves among
Her cup-piled shelves, and chairs of cane;

The while her lord, couched on the ground,
Drains fragrant draughts composedly;
Or reads from pictured walls around
Some maxim of wise Con-fut-zee.
While, grouped in orchard alleys now,
His youngsters cull the ripened fruits,
Collect each gumm'd acacia bough,
Or nip the fragrant harvest shoots
On garden plat and hilly brake:
And listening in the calm he hears
The hail of fishers on the lake;
The distant clash of shepherd shears:
The peacock screams upon the rock,
The white swan breasts the river's sedge;
The bee swarm quit their hive, and flock
In clusters round the sunny hedge.
The balsam wind blows from the wood,
The templed summits spark with dew,
And streaming over hill and flood
The orient goldens up the blue.

'Tis noon, within some City's street,
The slumbrous tree rows scarcely stir,
The portals close against the heat,
And sunny silence spreads afar.
In groups, the merchants, brown and keen,
Collect in cool verandas round
With bamboo pipes, and cups between:

The low-toned dinner gongs resound.
In casements open toward the east,
Where some faint terrace fountain flows
Icing the noon, the nobles feast,
Or stretched in soft siesta's drowse;
As lapped in odours ladies bright
Rest 'mid their cushion's silken dell,
The ebon tress, camelia cheek,
And beauteous feet invisible.
At corners shadow'd from the glare
The grave-browed fortune-tellers stand,
With piles of coin before them there,
And cards of crimson in their hand;
While hamlet groups who come to pass
A day in town, with eager eyes
Wait on them; bronzed lad and lass
Intent upon their destinies,
While to the train the sage allots
The sumptuous chances yet to be;—
Great mansions raised o'er trimmest plots
Of orange, wealthy tracts of tea;
To one the future days unfold
The state his subtle mind shall win:—
Rich cedar chests of garnered gold;—
The post of mightiest mandarin;
The polished step beneath the throne,
Where he will shape the empire's laws;

Infinite riches and applause
He portions each, and each alone.

Now rounds the western'ing sun along
The hills where summer vapours curl
On Tchukiang, and strikes among
Its mines of turquois, lakes of pearl.
Now from brown Tonquin's southern bowers,
Thick tasselled with the perfumed bean,
The tropic wind blows warm, and showers
The light o'er each veranda screen.
The peasant walks behind his team,
And slowly works the reaper brown
In rice fields skirting the blue stream,
From bridge to bridge, from town to town.
Gay groups of gleaners hurry home,
Their baskets piled with fragrant leaves;
Or on the carts of harvest come,
High couched upon the golden sheaves,—
Mild sicklemen and girls a-row:
While soft the parting splendours fall
Upon each crescent-pencill'd brow,
And eyes of glossy ebon small.
Now where yon blue pagoda's spires
Adown the hill their shadows fling,
The perfumes mist the altar fires,
The myriad bells of silver ring:
And on the spacious river bright

The fishing bird is seen to dive,
And through the thymy air and light
The bee sails toward the garden hive;
Till o'er the fretted temples brood
The sparkling orient stars, and soon
By many a stream and musky wood
Aflame with silver, floats the moon,
Though mighty azure ranges rolled,
Whence come from the Tartarean lea
The caravan with fur and gold,
The camel weighed with silk and tea.

Lo! as the gentle evening air
Floats from the blue hills o'er the town,
Upon the roofs in myriads there,
The folk collect, and gazing down
Behold the busy day decline
Along the shadowing streets afar;
The wreathed lamps of crimson shine
Through cool arcade and rich bazaar.
By suburb stretches opes the scene
Of forests wide and moonlit walls;
The square-sailed barges slide between
The leafy banks of quaint canals.
In spacious lanterned Halls, elate
With costly pomp and courteous train,
The mandarins enjoy their state,
The merchants muse upon their gain.

In college cloisters cool and high,
The regnant spirits of the day
Develope to utility
The intellect of great Cathay.
'Mid volumes of high precedent
The literati, gravely met,
Shape to the coming Age's bent
Codes of compactest etiquette:—
Nice gestures subtle and succinct
To mark the grades to honour grown;
To keep each rising class distinct,
And with obeisance guard the throne
From furious factions who might choose
The right hand, when great Chang goes by,
Or sceptic scoffers who refuse
To bow to Fum's divinity.

Let none deride the princely line
That ruled Cathay when time was new,
Those umberella'd kings divine,
Who grasped the fan of Rangchi-chu;
Who battled with the barbarous hordes,
And flashing fireworks from their van
Besieged the eyebrows and the beards
Of many a furious Tartar clan;
And built the mighty wall, and bold
As brick could make them 'gainst the foe,
Swore by their whiskers to uphold

The learned laws of Hoang-ho!
Oh! wondrous people, ye whose birth,
No annals save thine own sublime
Can tell of:—race of anti-earth
And independent of all time,
When musing o'er thy dynasties,
The curious eyed chronologist
Grows pale amid those distant days,
Enveloped in primeval mist;
When reigned as in a peaceful trance
Thy mild-eyed monarchs, 'mid the din
Of conquest crowned with permanence;
Who in thy palaces, Pekin,
Drank all unnerved their congo strong;
While Greek and Mede, in furious tilt,
Fought for the world, and sipped souchong,
Before the Pyramids were built:
From cups of polished porcellain,
Toasted the moon, ere Britain's brow
Rose o'er the conquered seas, and when
Her kings were like New Zealand's now.

Eclipse.

Once as the orbs of space were cast
In opposition, and the moon
In darkness drowned the Autumn noon,
And giant phantoms cross'd the vast,
We watched the spacious shadow roll
Along the disc that makes our day,
And lapse in god-like gloom away,
Like Death across the eternal soul;
Then, as the light grew broad, and won
A gradual glory from the gloom,
And Nature, from her transient tomb,
In worship clasped the exultant sun,
A silent circle pondered we,—
Above a science volumn sage,
And read from out its magic page
The legend of Infinity.
The mighty changes yet to come,
The centring splendour of the years
That yet shall crown the starry spheres,
And last, of this our little home;

And thought of living nations then
  Rolled nearer to the noon of Time;
  Of wisdom grown to riches prime
In brighter years and nobler men;—
When sovereign souls, the earth's elect,
  Crowned with the intellectual dower,
  With knowledge ample as their power,
Shall blend their spirits to direct
The human forces, long distraught
  With brutal energies to war,
  Till underneath a peaceful star
Shall rise a temperate age of Thought,
Whose Genius, tuned to Culture's mood,
  Shall turn to fruits of golden day
  The cold residuum of decay,
And mould from ill, results of good;
When men shall labour hand in hand
  With earnest purpose, to outroll
  The glories of the temporal soul;
The genius of each clime and land;
Till crescenting the years gone by,
  Shall rise above each stormy age
  Its spiritual heritage,
In rainbows of eternity.
When science subtle, and sublime,
  Shall weigh the star and guide the brain,
  Dissect the animalcule grain
Or strike prophetic eyes through time;

And by her side seraphic, Art
  Shall mirror beauties all around
  In harmonies of hue and sound,
Alike the landscape and the heart;
When Hero, Saint, and Poet sage,
  In brightning orbs shall multiply
  And act, and think from sky to sky
As on a true eternal stage.

When blending their collective lights
  The Senates of each land shall reign
  By force of justice, and ordain
A brotherhood of equal rights
To all in merit's due degree;
  Not floating with the temporal waves,
  By faction weakened, or the slaves
Of narrow personality;
But labouring so that each upon
  The nation's regnant height may wear
  Their noble crowns of public care
In conscientious unison;—
In fearless enterprise combine,
  And moulding circumstance create
  The basis of earth's future fate,—
The fabric of a life divine:—
Oh! then may the eclipses fall
  In shadow spots from yonder height

To mark the page of time and light
In shining sentences for all,
Who learn to read as in a scroll
The progress of the star they trod,
And murmur o'er in praise to God
The deepening Poem of World and Soul.

Love.

Does love grow deeper when the heart is worn
With sorrow, and affection swell the most
When thinking of the dear ones we have lost?
Then must the dead and living hopeless mourn,
And mourning, deeper love. Along the sea
That spreads between us and each spirit star
Strains toward us their sad voice inaudibly,
As ours to them; except it wisdom be
No more to grieve o'er helpless doom, but rest
Our souls upon the will of Deity,
And what we cannot change believe the best.
If this be wisdom, give me rather Love
To light my life with, and to wreathe the grave;
Nor let my peace and comfort grow above
Old blessed memories, but sorrow-brave
Seek rather through my tears to catch one look
Of days when one dear Angel cheered my hearth,
Than heedless take the griefs and joys of earth,
And read my life like some cold science book.

Life.

I.

Some through sunny life are pacing,
Shadow'd by its distant goal,
Some exhaust in pleasure tracing
All the glories of the soul.
Not with brightest cups and clusters
Shall we waste a shortening road,
While, beyond, eternal lustres
Light us from the Heavens of God.
Nor, though near yon gloomy portal
Yawns to take our little breath,
Shall we measure shapes immortal
By the skeleton of Death.

II.

From the chances past us flowing
Let us mould our destiny;
Hopes still round our paths are growing;
Cares but strengthen us, and die:
Time and death that leave us lonely
Kill not love, while tears that start

Like the cavern's drop, have only
Graven experience on the heart.
Yet though sweetest sorrows woo us,
Cheerfulness is more divine;
Though the upas bend unto us,
We will couch us by the vine.

III.

With the vast of God above us,
And the gracious earth below,
Toward that home of souls who love us,
Past the sunset, let us go;
Spirit-like through life's disasters,
Bravely tread the darkest ways;
Ever working to be masters
Of the distant golden days;
For, though present pleasures cheer us
Future joys are grander far;
Though the glow worm sparkle near us,
We will turn unto the Star.

THE END.

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